THE

Mystery of FAITH

Opened up:

Or some SERMONS

concerning Faith (two whereof were not formerly Printed.)

Wherein the Nature, Excellency, and Usefulness of that noble grace is much cleared, and the practice thereof most powerfully pressed.

Whereunto are added other three Sermons, two concerning the *Great Salvation*, one of these not formerly Printed, and a third concerning *DEATH*.

By Mr. *ANDREW GRAY*, late Minister of the Gospel in *Glasgow*.

All these SERMONS being now carefully Revised, and much Corrected.

John 3. 18. *He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God.*

EDINBURGH:
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Christian Reader.

AMongst many weighty and soul piercing sentences that you wil find in these following Sermons, this is one, That the professors of this age, whether they go to Heaven or Hell, they will be the greatest debtors that shall be in either place: the one to the free Grace of God. and the other to his Justice. And certainly if we speak of these in this time, whose blessed lot it shall be to inherit the Kingdom, they cannot but acknowledge themselves indebted to his love, above all that have gone before them, for washing them from such ugly pollutions, as this generation hath been defiled with, for bringing them through so grea tribulations, preserving them in the midst of so gre tentations, and dangerous snares, as have encompass them; yea, and still keeping in the light before the notwithstanding of so many blasts (if we may so speak from all the four winds of Hell to blow it out. An on the other hand, if we shall speak of these who i this generation shall perish, assuredly their debt un Divine Justice must be exceeding great, above all w are gone down to the pit before them, because the roll their mercies are found to have been many cubits longe and many cubits broader, than theirs who lived in t preceeding ages: and the great things that the L hath wrought in our days, have born a greater testi

againſt the wickedneſs, hardneſs and atheiſm of this time, than many former. But above all, the great meaſure of Goſpel-light that he hath no leſs plentifully offered, then wonderfully preſerved to this generation, beyond all our Anceſtors; hath undoubtedly made the ſin of theſe who ſhall utterly reject their own mercy, ſo out of meaſure ſinful, and their unbelief ſo exceedingly inexcuſeable, that their guilt muſt needs juſtifie Chorazin *and* Bethſaida, *or* Sodom and Gomorah in that day when every man ſhall give aecount of himſelf to God. *And amongſt the many preaching witneſſes that (alas we are afraid) ſhall compear* in that day *againſt many yet living* in their pleaſures, and dead while they live: *This* now glorified Author *cannot but be one, whoſe teſtimony muſt be very condemning, eſpecially to the vain, looſe, negligent and time-waſting youth in this age. For when he was firſt drawn to the miniſtry, he was but a youth indeed, ſcarce twenty years compleat; far within that age, that by the conſtitutions of this Church (except in caſe of more then common abilities, which indeed he had) is required for entring to that great and holy calling; And for the ſpace of two years after (which was all the time that the Church enjoyed his Labour, he was helped to preſs the truths and Threatnings of God ſo home upon the Conſciences of his hearers, that as it was obſerved of him, by one of his moſt Learned and pious Colleagues* Mr. Durham, *who is now in glory with him) he did many times cauſe the hair of their head to ſtand up: The Lord not only hereby verifying his Word, that he can* take the weak things of the world to confound the ſtrong, and out of the mouth of Babes can perfect his own praiſe, *but deſigning alſo (as would ſeem of purpoſe) to find a Boy out of the School for a reprover of the ſluggiſhneſs of his People, that thereby the* aged *might be more aſhamed, and the* younger *more afraid*: Nither

ther do we think that this was all, but truly when we conſider what meaſure of Graces, Gifts, and experiences the Lord did beſtow upon ſo young a perſon, and then with what humility, ſelf-denial, gravity, prudence, diligence, authority, and moderation he was helped to manage theſe Talents during that ſhort time of his Miniſtry: It may be juſtly conceived that the Lord brought him forth to be a great conviction even to many of us in the Miniſtry who came into our Maſters vineyard long before him, and will go out behind him: And indeed to us it looketh ſomewhat like the Lords taking up of the little Child *and ſetting him amongſt the midſt of his contending Diſciples in theſe times, that even they who would be greateſt amongſt us, might be leaſt, and ſee ſomewhat of their own weakneſs.*

As to this little Piece, *whatever ye ſhall find in it, it hath this to ſay for it ſelf, that whereas many Writings in the World, do intrude themſelves upon the Preſs, yet this the Preſs hath violently thruſt into the World: For ſome young ſtudent from his good affection to the edification of the Lords People, and (no doubt) from his high eſteem of the precious Author his memory, having given in to the Preſs, a Copy of ſome of theſe Sermons being only Notes taken from his mouth when he preached them, no ſooner were they ſeen abroad, but all the Preſſes in the Nation fell a labouring about them, that (if we miſtake not) in leſs then two or three moneths time, three or four Impreſſions were caſt off, yet all of them ſo imperfect and maimed, that how-beit the excellency of the matter and the freſh remembrance of the worthy Author, his name made them very ſweet to many (eſpecially thoſe who had heard him preach) yet the unſuitable dreſs wherein they appeared and their miſtakes of the firſt Writers (they being hardly able to take up every thing as it was ſpoken) occaſioning diverſe material failings in the ſenſe, be-*

leſſer faults, could not but be a trouble to thoſe who are acquainted not only with the ſingular graces, but parts alſo of the eminent Youth. This gave occaſion to ſome friends to ſpeak a little what may theſe prejudices, which both the truth and the Authors Name might ly under, by theſe incorrect impreſſions might be taken off. And finding that the Copy, which by providence, the worthy young Gentlewoman, who was his wife, had lying by her, though it was but Notes taken from his mouth, yet was the moſt correct that could be found: And that it alſo did contain the whole purpoſes that he had preached upon theſe Texts; Yea, the whole purpoſes concerning Faith that he had Preached, according to that method purpoſed in the firſt of the Sermons formerly publiſhed. This was undertaken to be reviſed by ſome who albeit none of the fitteſt for theſe imployments, yet rather or nothing ſhould be done in the buſineſs, were content to beſtow ſome hours upon it according as other neceſſary imployments would permit. And now having ſought out all the notes of theſe Sermons which we could find from their hands, and compared them with the Copy above-mentioned, we do again preſent them to the people, not with any confidence that our pains hath put any effect upon them; only we have ſome hopes the whole ſubject being now before them, and theſe things in the way of expreſſion helped, which either might ſeem to be ſomewhat unpleaſant, or lyable to miſtakes, they ſhall not now be leſs edifying nor leſs acceptable then formerly they were. We did not think fit to make any conſiderable alterations as to the method, or other things of that kind, leſt haply by ſtraining his excellent purpoſes too much, to ſhape them to the ordinary rules, or to reduce them to that order which might have pleaſed our ſelves, we ſhould have wronged the matter it ſelf, at leaſt have put them to a loſs who did hear him preach; and it may be now upon their reading things in that ſame

ſame order as they heard them, will be the more readily brought under the impreſſions of that livelineſs, power and weight which (it may be) formerly they felt upon their hearts when he was ſpeaking.

If the method do not altogether ſatisfie ſome ſpirits, or the explication ſeem not ſo full; or if they find ſome introductions which poſſibly lead not in ſo cloſs, or ſeem not ſo ſuitable to the ſubject of the Sermons; or haply now and then there be ſome little digreſſions from the main purpoſe, we ſhall deſire that this may not at all be conſtructed to be the Authors ignorance of rules and method, or his want of abilities in humane learning, it being well known to thoſe who were beſt acquainted with him, that he indeed had a ſcholaſtick ſpirit, and was in reading far beyond his age and opportunities for ſtudying; but as to all theſe we ſhall intreat you rather to conſider, 1. *His age, and that his gift was but in the very moulding and breaking (as we ſpeak) in the point of order and method, when the Lord was pleaſed to call him home from his work.* 2. That every man hath his proper gift of God, *who in his great wiſdom, and certainly for the good of his Church, doth ſo order, that there is ſomewhat ſingular and peculiar almoſt in every mans way, as to theſe things.* 3. Fo *any thing we know he had never that high eſteem o this, or any other of his labours, as to deſign any of the for publick view; and theſe are but Notes taken fro his mouth.* 4. *we are perſwaded be ſtudied more hi hearers then himſelf. Ye will eaſily perceive, when have but read a little, that he hath been a man of a v ry zealous temper; that the great benſil of his ſpirit, a that which he did wholly ſpend himſelf about, was make people know their dangerous condition by natu and by all means to perſwade them* to believe and l *hold* upon the great ſalvation: *And truely, tha*

man in such a frame should less attend to these lesser things, is not to be wondered at. And indeed, though these things be good in themselves, and worthy to be looked to in their own place, yet for a Minister of the Gospel, in all Auditories, and upon all occasions, to pin up every purpose to such a method; and insist into such a measure of explications and Criticisms upon words, it is but to selter himself, and to starve his people. 5. Consider the dulness of the most part of the hearers in this age, and how hard a thing it is to awake a sleeping world, and to get them but to think that it doth concern them to hear in earnest; and possibly it was not a small piece of spiritual wisdom in him (and it may be not unfit to be imitate by others) to begin or end all his Sermons with an awakening word concerning Heaven, or Hell, or Judgement, and the danger of chooſing the evil, and refusing the good. 6. For digressions, the truth is, that his soul was so filled with such longings after Heaven and Glory, and so inflamed with the love of Christ, especially towards the latter end of his race, that when he fel on those subjects, upon which ye will see) most of these digressions are, he could not well contain himself, nor easily bring off his own spirit! a thing not unusual to the Saints in Scripture: and albeit such things might seem somewhat singular (in the time) and not so coherent; yet now we have grounds to apprehend, that they were often strong influences of the Lords Spirit, stirring up a lamp as it were, into a golden blaze, that was not to burn long in his Church. But now we shall detain you no longer, only this we can assure you of, that though these Sermons are neither so exact, nor so full, as doubtless they would have been, if they had come from the Authors own pen; yet as we dare say, they were studied with prayer, preached with power, and backed with success; so also, if ye shall read them with consideration, meditate with prayer, and

and practise with diligence, ye shall neither find your time nor pains ill bestowed; but shall have cause to bless the Lord for this, amongst other helps, that he hath given for making you meet for the inheritance of the Saints in light. That it may be blest to their end, is the earnest desire and prayer of your servants in the work of the Lord,

Ro. Trail.
Jo. Sterling.

The Mystery of Faith Opened up.

SERMON I.

1 Joh. 3. 23. *This is his Commandment, that ye should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ*, &c.

THis everlasting Gospel (in which there are drawn so many precious draughts of divine lineaments of the transcendent beauty of a crucified Saviour, and of the riches of his unsearchable grace) is the most precious and excellent thing, not only because it doth contain most absolute and sublime precepts and commands, in the exercise and obedience of which, we do not only attain unto the highest pitch in holiness, but likewise, because it containeth most rich and precious promises, in the possession & fruition of which we are advanced to the highest pinacle of eternal blessedness, this is clear in the grace of Faith; for what doth more purifie the heart, or stamp it with the Image of the invisible God than this grace of Faith? And what richer promises are annexed to any duty, then to this duty of believing, to wit, everlasting life, and fruition of God. So that if we have dwelt forty days at the foot of Mount *Sinai*, and had been under the greatest discovery and condemning power of the Law, we may come with boldness to mount Sion, and the

brace Jesus Christ, who is *the end of the Law for righteousness to such as believe*; Upon which Mount he standeth holding forth the golden Scepter of his peace, desiring us to imbrace him, and is crying out that word in *Isa.* 65. 1. *Behold me, behold me.* O may we not summond Angels, and these twenty four Elders about the Throne, to help us to wonder that ever such a command as this came forth, that we should believe on the name of the Son of God, after that we had broken that first and primitive command, *That we should not eat of the forbidden tree!* Was not this indeed to make mercy rejoyce over judgment? And O may we not wonder at the precious oath of the everlasting Covenant whereby he hath sworn, *That he delighteth not in the death of sinners?* What (suppose ye) were poor *Adams* thoughts when at first the Doctrine of Free-grace and of a crucified Christ Jesus a Saviour, was preached unto him in Paradise? What a divine surprisal was this, that heaven should have preached peace to earth, ere that earth had proclaimed war against heaven? Is not this a low step of condescendency, to behold an offended God preaching Peace and goodwill to a guilty sinner? What could self-destroying Adam think of these morning and first discoveries of the everlasting Covenant? Christ, as it were, in the beginning of time giving vent to that infinite love, which was resting in his bosom & precious heart, before the foundation of the world was laid. We know not whether the infiniteness of his love, the eternity of his love, or the freedom of it, maketh up the greatest wonder; But sure, these three joyned together, make up a matchless and everlasting wonder. Would you ask the Question, What is Christ worth, I could give no answer so suitable as this, It is above all the Arithmetick of all the Angels in heaven

ven and all the men on earth, to calculate his worth, all men here must be put to a divine *non-plus*, this was *Jobs* divinity, *Job* 8. 13. *Man knoweth not the price of wisdom*, and must not Jesus Christ who is the precious object of Faith, and wisdom of the Father, be a supereminent and excellent One, who hath that Name of *King of kings, and Lord of lords* not only ingraven on his vesture, (which pointeth out the conspicuousness of his Majesty) but even also upon his thigh, to point out that in all his goings and motions, he proveth himself to be higher than the Kings of the earth? And howbeit the naked proposing of the object doth not convert, yet if once our souls were admitted to behold such a sight as Christ in his Beauty and Majesty, and to be satisfied with the divine rays of his transcendent glory, then certainly we should find a blessed necessity laid upon us of closing with him; for Christ hath a sword proceeding out of his precious mouth, by which he doth subject and subjugate his own to himself, as well as he hath a sword girded upon his thigh, by which he judgeth and maketh war with his enemies. We confess it is not only hard, but simply impossible, to commit a Hyperbole in commending of him; His worth being always so far above our expressions, and our expressions always so far beneath his worth, that before we may be put to propose that desire unto him, *Exalt thy self, O Lord, above the Heavens.*

But now to our purpose, being at this time to begin our discourse upon that radical and precious grace of Faith, we intend to speak of it under a twofold notion and consideration: First, We shall speak of it as it is justifying, *or as it doth lay hold upon the righteousness of a crucified Saviour, making application of the precious promises in the Covenant of grace, which we call justifying Faith.* And in the

cond place, we ſhall ſpeak a little unto Faith, *as it doth lay hold upon Chriſts ſtrength, for advancing the work of mortification, and doth diſcover the perſonal excellencies of Jeſus Chriſt, by which we advance in the work of holineſs and divine conformity with God, which we call ſanctifying Faith.* However, it is not to be ſuppoſed, that theſe are different habits of Faith, but different acts flowing from the ſame ſaving habit, laying hold and exerciſing themſelves upon Chriſt in different reſpects, and for diverſe ends. Now to ſpeak upon the firſt, we have made choice of theſe words. The Apoſtle *John* in the former verſe, hath been pointing out the precious advantages of the grace of obedience, & of keeping his commands, that ſuch a one hath, as it were, an arbitrary power with God, and doth receive many precious returns of prayer: As likewiſe, that one who is exerciſed in the grace of repentance, is Gods delight: which is included in this, that he doth theſe things which are pleaſing in his ſight. And now in theſe words he doth as it were, anſwer an objection that might be propoſed, about the impoſſibility of attaining theſe precious advantages, ſeeing his commands were ſo large, and that hardly could they be remembred. This he doth ſweetly anſwer, by ſetting down in this verſe a ſhort compend or breviary both of Law and Goſpel, *viz. That we ſhould love one another*, which is the compend of the Law: and, *That we ſhould believe on the Name of His Son*; which is the compend of the Goſpel. And by this he ſheweth the Chriſtian, that there are not many things required of him, for obtaining theſe excellent advantages; but if he exerciſe himſelf in the obedience of theſe two compreheſive commandments, he ſhall find favour both with God and men. And as concerning this precious grace of Faith; We have, 1. the advantages of it implied

plied in the words, and clear alſo from the ſcope, as (no doubt) all the commands have infinit advantages infolded in their boſom, which redounds to a Believer, by his practiſing of them. And, 2. the excellency of it holden forth in the words, in that it is called *His command*, as if he had no other command but this. (And the Greek particle is here prefixed, which hath a great deal of emphaſis and force in it, Καὶ αὐτῆ ἐστιν ἡ ἐντολὴ αὐτοῦ) But, 3. There is this alſo, the abſolute neceſſity of this grace, holden forth here in this word, *His Commandment*; as if he would have ſaid, by propoſing of this command, I do ſet life and death before you, and that ye would not conceive that it is an arbitrary and indifferent thing for you to believe, or not: But be perſwaded of this, that an infinite advantage may conſtrain you to the obedience of it, ſo abſolute neceſſity muſt perſwade you to act that which is of your everlaſting concern. And laſtly, Ye have the precious Object upon which Faith (which is juſtifying) doth exerciſe it ſelf, that is upon the Name of the Son of God; And (no doubt) Faith is that excellent grace, which doth elevate the ſoul unto a ſweet and inſeparable union with Chriſt: and is that golden and precious bond that doth eternally knit the hearts of theſe perſons friends together. Faith is that grace that draws the firſt draughts of Chriſts precious Image on the hearts, & by love doth accompliſh and perfite it. Now Faith taketh hold not only on the faithfulneſs of God, that he is a God of truth, and that in him there is no lie: but likewiſe it taketh hold on the omnipotency of God, that he is one to whom nothing is too hard: and on the infinite mercy and goodneſs of God, that he is one who doth delight to magnify this Attribute above all his works. And theſe are the great pillars of juſtifying Faith. From the

ſwereth all theſe objections of ſenſe, which do ordinarily cry forth, *Doth his promiſe fail for evermore?* And that with this one word, *If he hath once purpoſed it, he will alſo do it*, and if he hath once *ſpoken it, he will alſo make it come to paſs.* From the ſecond, it anſwereth all theſe objections that may ariſe from carnal reaſon and probability, which tend to the weakening of his confidence. And theſe do oftentimes cry out, *How can theſe things be?* But Faith laying hold upon the omnipotency of God, *it ſtaggers not at the promiſe*, but is ſtrong *in the Faith, giving glory to God.* And it is the noble and divine exiſe of this Heroick grace of Faith, that theſe obions of reaſon and probability, which it cannot er, it will lay them aſide, and yet cloſe with the miſe; which was the practice of believing *Abra-* who *conſidered not* his own body being weak, he barrenneſs of *Sarahs* womb. As likewiſe it the commendable practice of that woman, . 15. who not being able to anſwer the ſecond f her Faith from reaſon, yet notwithſtanding made her cry out, *Have mercy upon me, O Son of* . And from the laſt a chriſtian doth anſwer all uments of misbelief which do ariſe from the tions of our unworthineſs & ſinfulneſs, which us oftentimes imbrace that divinity of *Peters*, 8. *Depart from me, for I am a ſinful man.* But king hold on the infinit mercy and love of it anſwereth all with this, He walks not with ding to that rule of merit, but according to cious and golden rule of love and boundleſs ion.

efore we ſhall ſpeak any thing unto you of ings, we would a little point out ſome few o be known as previous to theſe; we ſhall not g in pointing out the nature of juſtifying Faith:

Faith: It is that grace whereby a Chriſtian being convinced of his loſt eſtate, and of an utter impoſſibility to ſave himſelf, he doth flee to the righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt, and unto him who is that precious City of refuge, and there doth abide till our High Prieſt ſhall die, which ſhall not be for ever. Or if ye will, it is a ſweet travelling of the immortal ſoul betwixt infinite miſery, and infinite mercy; betwixt an utter impoſſibility to ſave our ſelves, and a compleat ability in him to *ſave to the uttermoſt*; betwixt abounding ſin, and ſuperabounding mercy: hence Faith is often holden forth to us in Scripture under that notion of coming, *Iſa.* 55. 1. *Ho every one that thirſteth come ye to the waters.* Rev. 22. 17. *Whoſoever will, let them take the water of life freely.* Heb. 7. 25. *Wherefore he is able alſo to ſave them to the uttermoſt that come to God by him.* And we may ſay by the way, that if once a ſinner could be brought to this, to count all his own righteouſneſs but filthy rags, and to believe that a man is as really juſtified before God by imputed righteouſneſs, as if it were by inherent holineſs; ſurely ſuch an one were not far from the Kingdom of God. Neither ſhall we ſtand long to point out this unto you, that it is your duty to believe; for it is clear, not only from this place, but likewiſe from *Iſa.* 45. 22. *Look unto me, and be ye ſaved all the ends of the earth.* Mat. 11. 28. *Come unto me all that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt.* Joh. 14. 1. *Ye believe in God, believe alſo in me.* Iſa. 55. 1. *Ho every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, Come buy wine and milk without money and without price.* But oh! it's a great miſery of many (and that which may be a ſubject of perpetual lamentation) that we can neither be ſubject to the Law, as commanding to obey it, nor as threatning to believe it: Nor to the Goſpel, as

miſing to embrace it, and ſweetly to receive it. O but that primitive temptation and deluſion whereby Satan did deceive our firſt father, is that whereby he yet ſeeks to catch and delude many ſouls, *viz.* That though we eat of the forbidden fruit, and walk in the vain imaginations of our own hearts, yet he doth ſuggeſt this to us, that we ſhall not die, but ſhall once be as God; this is Satans great and deluding Divinity: And therefore to inforce this great and precious command a little further, we ſhall propoſe theſe conſiderations.

Firſt, That the Goſpel hath laid no obſtruction in our way of cloſing with Chriſt, and partaking of the effects of the Goſpel; but on the contrary, ſheweth that the great impediment is our want of willingneſs which we lay in our own way, as is clear from *John* 5. 40. *Ye will not come to me that ye may have life*; as likewiſe from *Revel.* 22. 17. *Where the gates of the Goſpel are caſt open, and whoſoever will*, are commanded to enter in: So that although you may father your misbelief upon your inability, and that your ſpot is not the ſpot of his people, yet know that the riſe and original of it is want of willingneſs. But to make this more clear, we would have you all knowing this, that all the qualifications annexed to this commandment of Faith, as that in *Matth.* 11. 28. ſpeaketh out the qualifications rather of theſe that will come, then of all theſe that ought to come: Or he inviteth theſe that through a ſpirit of diſcouragement and misbelief, have the greateſt reluctancy to come, and may not that cardinal and ſoul-refreſhing promiſe, *John* 6. 37. ſtop the mouth of misbelief, ſo that it ſhould have nothing to ſay? *He that cometh unto me, I will in no wiſe caſt out*; may reduce your misbelief rather to the ſinfulneſs of your will, then to the ſinfulneſs of your walk, and if

if once ye could come the length of willingneſs to embrace Jeſus Chriſt, all other objections and knots ſhould be ſweetly looſed and diſſolved.

Secondly, Conſider that though we ſhould pray the one half of our time, and weep the other, yet if we want this noble grace of Faith, the wrath of God ſhall abide on us. What are all the works of theſe hypocrites, and theſe gliſtering acts of Law-ſanctification, but a plunging of our ſelves in the ditch, until our own cloaths abhor us? Therefore it is, that after the Prophet *Zachary* hath made mention in the twelfth Chapter of his Propheſie, of making *bitter lamentation for him whom we have pierced, as for an only Son*, yet in the beginning of the 13. Chap. he maketh mention of a *Fountain opened to the houſe of David for ſin and for uncleanneſs*; which may intimate unto us, that although we have waſh't ourſelves with our own tears, yet there is uſe of the blood of Chriſt, and that we muſt be waſhed in that fountain even from our *own righteouſneſs which are but filthy rags*.

Thirdly, Conſider that great and monſtruous ſinfulneſs that is in this ſin of unbelief; we will ſtrain at a gnat, but many will eaſily ſwallow down a Camel: We will tithe mint and anniſe, and faſt twice in the week, but neglect faith, and love, and judgment, which are the weightier things of the Law. And indeed there are theſe things which ſhew out the ſinfulneſs of unbelief, 1. That when the Holy Ghoſt is ſent to convince the world of ſin, *John* 16. 9. He pitched upon this ſin, as though there were no other ſin of which the world had need to be convinced, *He will convince the world of ſin, becauſe they believe not on the ſon of God*: and no doubt there is much ſinfulneſs in that ſin, then in many breaches of the Moral Law, it being a ſin againſt matchleſs love

againſt that which is the remedy of ſin. 2. That it is called by way of eminency, diſobedience, as is clear from *Heb.* 4. 11. *Leſt any of you fall after the ſame example of unbelief*; or as the word may be rendred, *leſt any of you fall after that example of diſobedience*, Eph. 2. 3.3. That amongſt all theſe that ſhall be eternally excommunicate from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, thoſe that are guilty of this ſin of unbeliet, they are put in the firſt place, *Rev.* 21.8. And, 4. That unbelief doth contradict and deny theſe three precious and cardinal attributes of God. 1. Doth not unbelief contradict his faithfulneſs, and make him a liar? 1 *Joh.* 5.1. 2. Doth it not contradict the infinitneſs of his power? And, 3. the infinitneſs of his love, and ſuppoſeth that there is ſomething too hard for him which his power cannot reach, nor his Infinite love overcome? We may reduce many of our queſtions and diſputings of his good will to this original, *viz.* to the diſputing of his power. No doubt if we belong to him, we ſhall learn to ſing that note of lamentation over our unbelief, *This is our infirmity, for changes are from the right hand of the moſt High.*

And laſtly, to enforce this precious command of Faith, conſider that it is his command which ſpeaketh forth this, that we muſt not take an indulgence or diſpenſation to our ſelves to believe, or not to believe at our pleaſure: and is it not a ſtrange thing that Chriſtians are leſs convinced of the breaches of the commandments of Faith, then of other commands? They think misbelief to be but a *Zoar*, a little ſin; and it proceedeth either from this, that the convictions of other ſins (as the neglect of prayer or the ſin of ſwearing, or committing adultery) do ariſe from a natural conſcience; for there is ſomewhat of natures light to make us abominate and hate them: when yet the light of nature will not lead us to the convictions of the ſinfulneſs of misbelief, it being a Goſpel and more ſpiritual ſin. Or it proceedeth from this, that unbelief doth ordinarily paſs vailed under the vizard of ſome refined vertue, as humility and tenderneſs, though that rather it may be ſaid, that it is pride and ignorance, cloathed with the garments of humility. And no doubt, Chriſt doth account obedience to this commandment of Faith, the greateſt act of humility, as is clear from *Rom.* 10.3. where it is called ſubmiſſion; they ſubmitted *not to the righteouſneſs of God*. Or elſe it proceedeth from this, that we conceive that the commandment of Faith is not of ſo large extent as other commands, and ſo doth not bind us to the obedience of it; but know this, that it ſhal be the condemnation of the world, that they have not believed on the Name of the Son of God; and no doubt but it is Satan's great design and cardinal project, to keep us back from obedience to the commandment of Faith, and that we ſhould not liſten to the precious promiſes of the everlaſting Goſpel, but ſhould reject the counſel of God againſt our ſelves, aud refuſe his precious and divine call.

The ſecond previous conſideration that we would give, ſhall be to ſhow you what are the cauſes that there is ſo much diſputing of our intereſt, and ſo little believing; that we are unſtable as water, neglecting our own excellency, ſpending ſo much of our time in walking under a cloud, and are ſo ſeldom admitted to read our names in theſe precious and eternal records of Heaven? No doubt theſe things have influence upon it, *viz.* 1. That we are apt in judging of God by his diſpenſations, then by his word, ſuppoſing ever the change of his diſpenſations do ſpeak forth the change of our ſtate; this is miſ-

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Divinity. That when ſenſe cannot read love in his face, but he appeareth to frown, and to caſt a cloud over it, then it is preſumption (faith ſenſe) to read love in his heart, or in his Word; but know it was a ſelf-denying practice of believing *Job* to cry out, *Though he ſhould kill me, I will believe in him*; therefore make not diſpenſations your Bible; otherwiſe ye will ſtumble at the noon-tide of the day and ſhall halt in your way; knew you never what ſuch a thing as this meaned, to aſcend in overcoming thoughts of his love, notwithſtanding any thing that his diſpenſations might preach? We conceive, that if the eyes of our faith were opened, we might ſee infinite love engraven on the darkeſt acts and moſt diſmal-like diſpenſations of his to us, though it be oftentimes written in dark and dim characters offenſe.

2. There is this likewiſe which hath influence upon our ſo much diſputing and misbelieving, *viz.* guilty conſcience, and the intertainment of ſome predominant luſt, which oftentimes occaſioneth walking in darkneſs and having no light: This clear from 1 *Tim.*2.19. where that precious jewel Faith can be holden in no other place but in a pure conſcience, that is that royal Place wherein it muſt dwel; And no doubt, if once we make *ſhipwrack of good conſcience*, we will *err concerning our faith*. A bosom Idol when it is intertained, doth exceedingly ſtop the vigorous exerciſe of theſe graces, which are evidences of our faith; and certainly, grace rather in its degrees, then in its ſincerity or ſimple being is that which giveth the clear evidence of faith. Therefore when we find not love in its hight and eminent actings, we hardly win to make it any clearly concluding demonſtration of our Faith.

As likewiſe, a boſom Idol, when it is entertained, maketh us to loſe much of our high eſteem and reputation

reputation of Jeſus Chriſt; which doth exceedingly interrupt the ſweet and precious actings of Faith. For it is certain, that if once the immortal ſoul be united to Jeſus Chriſt by the bond of love and reſpect, then our Faith will increaſe with the increaſe of God. Our intertainment of a boſom idol is ordinarily puniſhed with the want of the ſenſible intimations of his grace, and of our intereſt in him: ſo that ſometimes his own are conſtrained to cry out, *God hath departed from me, and he anſwereth me not neither by dreams nor viſions.*

4. There is that likewiſe that hath influence upon it, our not cloſing abſolutely with Jeſus Chriſt, but upon conditions and ſuppoſitions. We make not an abſolute and blank reſignation of our ſelves over unto Chriſt, to hold faſt the covenant, notwithſtanding he ſhould diſpenſe both bitter & ſad things to us; but we conceive that Chriſts Covenant with believers, is like that Covenant that God made with *Noah*, that there ſhould be Summer and Winter, ſeed time & harveſt, night and day unto a Chriſtian. A Chriſtian muſt have his night as well as his day: he muſt once ſow in tears, before he reap in joy: he muſt once go forth, bearing his preciousſeed, before he can return bearing his ſheaves in his boſom: and that this hath influence upon our inſtability, may be ſeen from this, that often a Chriſtian after his firſt cloſing with Chriſt, he meeteth with deſertion in point of tenderneſs, in point of joy, and in point of ſtrength, ſo that his corruption ſeems now to be awaked more then formerly, that he wants thoſe ſeeming injoyments of him which formerly he had: & that much of his ſoftneſs of heart hath now evaniſhed, which is clear ſomewhat from *Heb.*10.32. *and after they were enlightned, they endured a great fight of afflictions.* For the word that is there rendred afflictions, ſignifieth a war

ward troubles through the motions of sin, as well as outward afflictions, *Gal.* 5.24. And God useth to dispense this way to his own, not only to take tryal of the sincerity of our closing with him, but to make our Faith more stedfast and sure. And no doubt, if we close not absolutely with Christ (when under these temptations & tryals) we will reject our confidence as a delusion, & suppose it to be but a morning dream: therefore it were a noble and divine practice of a Christian, to close with Christ without reservation, seing he doth dispense nothing but that which might tend to our advantage. And we would say to such as are under these temptations, that if ye endeavour to resist them, it is the most compendious and excellent way to make your hearts, which now are *dying as a stone*, to be as *a watered garden, and as springs of water, whose waters fail not, and to make you strong as a Lyon*, so that no tempration can rouse you up; but ye shal be enabled to *tread upon the high places of the earth*, & to sing songs of triumph over your idols.

5. There is this likewise that hath influence on [illegible], our building of our Faith more upon sense then upon Christ or his Word; and therefore it is, that [illegible]aith is so constant and changeable as the Moon, [illegible]e not knowing what such a thing meaneth, *To hope [illegible]ainst hope, and to be strong in Faith; giving glory [illegible] God.* And we would only say unto you that erect [illegible]ur confidence upon so sandy a foundation, that [illegible]en the wind and storm of tempration shall blow, [illegible]t house shall fall to the ground. As likewise, building your Faith upon sense, doth abate much of your [illegible], and much of your precious esteem of Jesus [illegible]rist: It being Faith exercising it self upon an in[illegible]ible object, that maketh the Christian, *to rejoice [illegible]h joy unspeakable and full of glory*, 1 Pet. 1. 8.

[illegible]. There is this last that hath influence upon it, even

even our sloathfulnesse in the exercise of our spiritual duties, by which Faith should be entertained: Faith is a tender grace, and a plant that must not be ruffled, but nourished through the sap of other precious graces; but we grow remisse in our spiritual duties, and do turn our selves upon the bed of security, as the door upon the hinges. And doth not our drowsinesse cloath us with rags, and make us fall into a deep sleep: while as if we were diligent, *our souls should be made fat and rich?* Yea, sloathfulness doth not only impede assurance in this, that it hindereth the divine communications of his love and respect by which assurance may be kept in life, *Cant.* 5. 2. *but* also *it maketh our poverty come on us as an armed man, and our want as one that travelleth.* And withall it letteth loose the chain by which our corruptions are tyed and maketh them to list up their head, by which our assurance is much darkned & impaired, and our hope is much converted into diffidence and despair. And we would only say this, it is the diligent Christian that is the believing Christian; and it is the believing Christian that is the diligent Christian: there being such a sweet reciprocation betwixt these two precious graces, that they die and live together.

Now thirdly, we shall shut up our discourse with this, in pointing out a little, what are those things that do obstruct a Christians closing with Christ, and believing in his precious Name.

1. We conceive that this woful evil doth spring and rise from that foundamental ignorance of this truth that there is a God, as is clear from *Heb.* 11. 6. Where that is required as a qualification of a Comer, *That he should believe that God is*: And assuredly, till once this precious truth be imprinted upon our souls, *as with a pen of iron, and point of a diamond*, we will look upon the Gospel as an Utopian fancy, and a deluding nor-

to teach unstable souls who know not the way to attain unto real blessedness. And truly it is a fault in many, that they begin to dispute their being in Christ, before they know there is a Christ: and to dispute their interest in him before they believe his beeing, and that there is such an one as is called Christ.

II. Our coming unto Christ is obstructed from the want of the real and spiritual convictions of our desperate and lost estate without Jesus Christ, and that our unspeakable misery is the want of him; which is clear from *Jer.* 2. 31. *We are lords, we will come no more to thee.* And it is evident from *Rev.* 3. 16, 18. that such a delusion as this doth overtake many, that they can reign as Kings without Jesus Christ; and that they can build their happiness, and establish their eternal felicity upon another foundation. But, O that we could once win to this, to believe what we are without Christ, and to believe what we shall be in the enjoyment of him: with the one eye to descend and look upon these deep draughts that the mystery of iniquity have imprinted upon our immortal souls; and withall to reflect upon the wages of sin, which is death, and be constrained to cry out, *Wo is me, for I am undone*: And with the other eye, to ascend and look to that help that is *laid upon One that is mighty, and to* make use of the righteousness of a crucified Saviour, that so what we want in our selves, we may get it abundantly made up in him.

III. There is this likewise that obstructeth our closing with Christ, our too much addictedness to the pleasures and carnal delights of a passing world, which is clear from *Luke* 14. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22. *Mat.* 22. 5, 6. where those that are invited to come to the feast of this Gospel, they do make their Apology, and with one consent do refuse it, some pretending an impossibility to come, and some pretending an unavoidable

unavoidable inconveniency in coming. And, O! what a ridiculous thing is that poor complement, that these deluded sinners used to Christ, *I pray you have us excused?* And is not the world the great plea and argument that they make use of, when they will not come and make use of Christ.

IV. There is this lastly, which doth obstruct ones coming to Christ, their unwillingness to be denied to their own righteousness, which is clear from *Rom.* 10. 23. and we conceive, if once these two were believed (which are the great Tropicks, out of which all these arguments may be brought to perswade you to imbrace Christ) to wit, the infinite excellency of his Person on whom we are to believe, & the infinite loss that those do sustain who shall be eternally rejected of him. We might be perswaded to entertain a divine abstractedness, & holy retirement from all things that are here below, & to pitch our desires alone upon him, *who is the everlasting wonder of Angels, and the glory of the higher house.* O! did we once suppose the unspeakable happiness of these whose Faith is now advanced unto everlasting felicity and fruition, and hath entred into that eternal possession of the promises, might we not be constrained to cry out, *It is good for us once to be there?* Christ weepeth to us in the Law, but we do not lament; and he pipeth to us in the Gospel, but we do not dance: he is willing to draw us *with the cords of men, and with the bonds of love, and yet we will not have him to reign over us.* May not Angels laugh at our folly, that we should so undervalue the Prince of love, and should contemn him who is holden in so high esteem and reverence in these two great assemblies that are above of Angels, and of the spirits of just men made perfect? Christ hath now given the first and second summonds, the day is approaching when the sad and woful summonds shall be sent

gainst us, *of departing from him into these everlasting flames*, out of which there is no redemption: and this shall be the capstone of our misery, that we had once life in offer, but did refuse it: And though there were four gates standing open toward the North, by which we might have entered into that everlasting rest, yet we choosed rather *to walk in the paths that lead down to death, and take hold of the chambers of hell.* O! but there are many that think the Gospel cunningly devised fables and foolishness, (they being unwilling to believe that which sense cannot comprehend, nor reason reach) and this is the reason why the Gospel is not imbraced, but is rejected as an humane invention, and as a morning dream, *&c.*

SERMON II.

1 John 3. 23. *This is his commandment, that ye should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ,* &c.

THere are three great and cardinal mysteries in the unfolding of which, all a Christians time ought to be spent, First, there is that precious d everlasting mysterie of Christs love and condendency: which those intellectuall Spirits, the Anls, are not able fully to comprehend. Secondly, ere is that woful mystery of the desperate deceitfulss and wickednesse of the heart, which no man was er yet able to fathom & comprehend. And thirdly, ere is that precious mystery of that eternal felicity nd blessednesse that is purchased unto the Saints, at once they shall reign with Christ, not a thousand ars only, but throughout all the ages of everlasting & dlesse eternity; so that there is this difference betwixt s Garden of everlasting delights, that Christ hath purchased

purchased to the Saints, and that first Paradice, and *Eden* wherein man was placed. There was a secret gate in the first, thorow which a man that had once entered in, might go out again. But in the second and precious *Eden*, there is no access for going out, and all that is to be known of these three mysteries is much comprehended in this, to know that they cannot fully be known. *Paul* was a blessed proficient in the study of the first mystery, and had almost attained to the highest class of knowledge, and yet he is constrained to profess himself to be ignorant of this, Hence is that word, *Eph.* 2. 19. *That ye may know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.* And is it not a mysterious command, to desire people to know that which cannot be known? The meaning whereof we conceive to be this in part, that *Paul* pressed this upon them, that they should study to know that this mystery of Christs love could not be known. *Jeremiah* was a blessed proficient in the knowledge and study of the second mystery; he had some morning and twi-light discoveries of that; and yet thought in some measure he had fathomed that deep, yet he is constrained to cry ou chap. 17. verse 9. *The heart is deceitfull above all thing and desperately wicked, who can know it?* And inde that which *Solomon* saith of Kings, *Prov.* 25. 3. m well be said of all men, in this respect: *The hea for height, and the earth for depth, and the hea man, is unsearchable.* The Apostle *Paul* also w blessed proficient in the study of the third myst having some morning and twi-light discoveries of promised rest, & was once caught up to the third h vens; and yet when he is beginning to speak o 1 *Cor.* 2. 9. he declareth all men to be ignorant of knowledge of this profound mystery of mans bles neſſe, and cryeth out, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear he neither have entred into the heart of man, the t*

which God hath prepared for them that love him. And if there be any thing further to be known of theſe myſteries, the grace of Faith is found worthy, among all the graces of the Spirit, *to open the ſeven ſeals* of theſe great depths of God. Is not the grace of Faith that whereby a Chriſtian doth take up the inviſible excellency and vertue of a dying Chriſt? Is not Faith that precious grace, by which a Chriſtian muſt take up the ſpots and blemiſhes that are within himſelf? And is not the grace of Faith, that precious grace that placeth a Chriſtian upon the top of mount *Piſga*, and there letteth him ſee a ſight of the promiſed land; and doth open a door in heaven, through which a Chriſtian is admitted to ſee Chriſt ſitting upon his Throne? And ſaith hath not only a kind of Omnipotency, as is clear, *that all things are poſſible to him that believeth*, but it hath a kind of Omniſciency, & all-knowledge, that it can take up and comprehend all the greateſt myſteries of Heaven, according to that word, *Prov.*28.5. *He that ſeeketh the Lord ſhall underſtand all things*: As if he had ſaid, there is nothing dark to a believing Chriſtian, as there is nothing impoſſible to a believing Chriſtian. As likewiſe Faith is that grace that muſt take aſide the vail, that is ſpread over the face of a crucified Chriſt: and Faith is that precious Spy that goeth forth, and taketh up theſe wonderful excellencies that are in him. The grace of love, as it were, is born blind, and it hath nothing wherewith to ſolace it ſelf, but that which is preſented unto it by this noble and excellent grace of Faith.

Now, before we ſhall ſpeak any thing to theſe things that we did propoſe to ſpeak of at the laſt occaſion: we ſhal yet ſpeak a little unto ſome things which are neceſſary to be known, for the diſtinct taking of the nature of juſtifying Faith; which is the great commandment of this everlaſting Goſpel;

and

and that which we would firſt ſpeak to, ſhall be this. What is the reaſon and ground that the Goſpel-conveyance of righteouſneſs and life, (and of the excellent things of this everlaſting Covenant) ſhould be through the exerciſe of the grace of Faith? For it is not ſaid in the Scripture that repentance juſtifieth, that love juſtifieth, or that mortification juſtifieth; but it is Faith only that juſtifieth, and it is faith by which a Chriſtian inheriteth the promiſes, ſo that is clear, that Faith is that conduit pype, through which are conveyed to us the great bleſſings of this everlaſting Covenant.

I. And the firſt ground of it is this, it is through *Faith, that all our bleſſings may be known to be by love, and by free and unſearchable grace*; as is clear, *Rom.* 4. 16. While the Apoſtle is giving a reaſon why the inheritance is conveyed to a Chriſtian through Faith; *It is of Faith* (ſaith he) *that it might be of grace*: for if the inheritance were conveyed to a Chriſtian through a Covenant of Works, then theſe ſpotleſs draughts of infinite love, and of unſearchable grace, ſhould not be written on our inheritance, as is clear, *Rom.* 4. 25. And it is that great deſign of Chriſt, to make his grace conſpicuous in conveying ſalvation to us through Faith.

II. There is this ſecond ground likewiſe of that all the promiſes and bleſſings of this everlaſting Covenant might be ſure and ſtedfaſt to us, therefore they are conveyed to us through the exerciſe of the grace of Faith; as is clear, Rom. 4. 16. *They are of Faith* (ſaith he) *that they may be ſure*: or as the word is, *they might be ſettled*, when the promiſes of life and eternal ſalvation were conveyed to us through mans obedience, were they not then moſt uncertain and unſtable. But is not Heaven your everlaſting crown now ſtedfaſt unto you, ſeeing you have that good

pillar of Christs everlasting righteousnesse to be the foundation of your faith, and the strength of your confidence in the day of need?

III. There is this third ground why the promises and excellent things of this Gospel are conveyed to a Christian through the exercise of Faith, all boasting and gloriation might be excluded, according to that word, *Rom.* 3. 27. *By what law is boasting excluded? Not by the law of works, but by the Law of Faith?* And certainly, seeing Christians have all the great things of heaven conveyed to them through the exercise of Faith; think ye not, that this shall be your first song when ye shal be within the gates of that new Jerusalem? *Not unto us not unto us, but unto thee doth belong the glory of our salvation.* O what a precious dignity were it, but for one half hour to be admitted to hear these spotlesse songs that are sung by these thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of holy Angels, that are round about his throne? Doth not *David* that sweet singer of Israel, now sing more sweetly nor he did while he was here now? Doth not deserted *Heman* now chant forth praises and everlasting songs of him that sitteth on the Throne? And doth not afflicted *Job* now sweetly after his captivity reduced, and he *entered in that land, where the voice of joy and gladnesse is mutually heard:* Would ye have a description of heaven? I could not give it no term so suitable as this, heaven is a rest without a rest for though there remains a rest for the righteous, yet *Rev.* 4. 8. *These four beasts that stand before the Throne, they rest not, night and day, crying, holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty*; yet there is much divine quietnes in that unquietnesse that is above.

V. There is this last ground, why the blessings of Gospel, and life and righteousnesse are conveyed to

to us through the exercise of Faith, that the way to attain to these things might be pleasant and easie, We are certainly perswaded that the way of winning to heaven by a covenant of works, was much more unpleasant and difficult; but it is not an easie way *of entring into the Holy of Holies*, to win into it through the exercise of Faith. *Are not all wisdoms wayes pleasantnes? Are not all her paths peace?* Was not that just self-denial in one that said, he would not take up a Crown though it were lying at his foot. But, oh! that cursed self-denyal doth possess the breasts of many, so that though that Crown of immortal glory and eternal blessednes be lying at your feet, yet ye will not imbrace it, not take it up: Is not the hatred of many to Christ covered with deceit? And therefore your *iniquitie shal be declared before the Congregation.*

Now that what we have spoken upon this, might be more clear, and that the nature of justifying Faith be not mistaken, we would have you taking notice of these things.

I. That the grace of Faith doth not justifie a Christain, as it is a work, or because of any inherent excellency and dignity that is in this grace above any other graces of the Spirit; but faith doth alone justifie a Christian, instrumentally, and objectively; that is, it is that by which a Christian is just, by laying hold on the precious object of it, the righteousnesse of Christ, And to clear this, we would only have you knowing this that faith doth justifie as it closeth with Christ: but not because it closes with Christ, which some vainly are bold to assert; because there is not any dignity or worth in the act of Faith in closing with Christ, that can be the foundation of our justification, else it were to confound that precious decreet of free grace.

2. There is this that we would have you all knowing

That Faith is not the instrument of Justification, (as Justification is taken in an active sense,) though it is the instrument of Justification, as it is taken in a Passive sense: and the ground of this conclusion is this, because it is impossible that any action in man can be an instrument of any action in God: And therefore that phrase that you have so ordinarily spoken of, *That Faith justifieth*, it is thus to be resolved, *That we are justified by Faith.*

3. There is this that we would have you knowing, that betwixt a Christians closing by Faith with the righteousness of Jesus Christ and the justification of a sinner, I say, there is no natural and indispensible connexion betwixt these two: but only there is a connexion of divine appointment, and of free grace, though we conceive there is a natural aptitude in the grace of Faith, to lay hold on the righteousness of Christ, more then there is in any other grace of the Spirit, as ye may see there is a more natural aptitude and fitness in the hand to receive then in any other organ of the body.

4. There is this also that we would have you knowing, that a Christian in his first closing with Christ, Christ (considered as crucified) is the immediate object of his Faith, and not Christ considered in his personal excellencies. Hence it is often in Scripture, that Christ as crucified, is holden forth as the immediate object of justifying Faith; as is clear, *Rom.* 3. 5, 24, 25. And the ground of this assertion is this, because that it is the formal object of justifying Faith, which doth formally justifie the sinner; and on which Faith doth immediately lay hold as a ransom to satisfie justice, and as a righteousness in which the Soul dare venture to be found when it shall stand before the Judgement-seat of God; and certainly, this is Christ, as obedient to the death

death of the cross. And it is likewise clear, that the thing which doth engage the soul to Christ, is not only because he is good in himself, but because he is good to us.

5. And there is this lastly, that we would have you knowing, That though faith doth alone justifie, yet Faith doth not justifie being alone: Hence is that which we have so often in Schools, *Fides justificat solum, licet non solitariè*, That Faith justifieth alone, though not being alone; as *James* doth speak, *Faith without works is dead, and is of none effect.*

Now that which secondly we shall speak to, shall be this; to point out to you some differences betwixt justifying Faith, which is in a real Believer, and temporary Faith which is in an Hypocrite, and one that is destitute of that everlasting hope, though he do pretend to have it.

And first, that there is such a thing as temporary Faith, as is clear from *Luke* 8. 13. it is said there of some, *that they believed for a season*; yea, in *Act.* 8. 13. it is said of *Simon Magus* (who was in the gall of bitterness & in the bond of iniquity) *he believed.* And those in *Joh.* 2. 23. *when they did behold the miracles, they believed on Jesus Christ*: and yet we conceive that their Faith was not sincere, and so this was not saving faith. And indeed ye may see a difference betwixt the two in the very name *temporary*; for this is such a faith as doth not continue long with him that hath it, but doth evanish and pass away: for as this is certain, *that an hypocrite will not always call upon God, Joh.* 27. so that is also certain, that an hypocrite will not always believe in God I tell you, that the longest time an hypocrite doth keep his faith, *Job* hath set down in his 18. Chapter, verse 14. *Their hope* (saith he) *shall bring them to the King of terrors, and then it shall be rooted out of them and their tabernacle*; their faith wil bring

them no further then the gates of death, and then their faith will flee away as a dream, and evaniſh as a viſion of the night.

II. There is this difference likewiſe betwixt them, that temporary faith it cloſeth with Chriſt as a Savior, and for righteouſneſs; but it cloſeth not with Chriſt as a Prince, and for ſanctification; but juſtifying faith taketh Chriſt as well for a Prince, as it taketh him for a Saviour: and if *Solomon* did diſcern who was the true mother of the child; by that, that ſhe who ſhould have the child divided, was not the mother of the child; ſo we may ſay, that they who would divide Chriſt in his Offices, it is an evidence that they are not amongſt thoſe who are actually made partakers of the adoption of children: there is ſomewhat of this pointed at in *John 6. 66.* Where that which made many who were his diſciples (and did once believe) deſert him, was becauſe of the hardneſſe of his command, *this is an hard ſaying, who can hear it?* And it is certain, that it is a greater difficulty for a Chriſtian to take Chriſt as a Prince, then a Saviour: for by that he muſt make an abſolute reſignation of himſelf over to Chriſt, never to be reduced. O! when ſaw you ſuch a ſight of Chriſt, that ye were conſtrained to cry out (without complement) to him, *Truly, I am thy ſervant, I am thy ſervant?* O were ye never raviſhed *with one of his eyes, nor overtaken with one chain of his neck?* Believe me, they who ſee him thus, do believe that his *commands are not grievous.*

III. There is this difference, that temporary faith is attained unto without the exerciſe of the Law; but juſtifying faith is not attained to without ſome meaſure of the exerciſe of the Law: this is clear, *Mark 4.* where ſpeaking of theſe temporary believers, its ſaid of them, *The fruit immediatly ſprang up* &c. Are there not ſome (it may be here) who think they do believe, and

and yet were never in any meaſure trembling under the diſcovering and condemning power of the Law? Is not that a myſtery, that one ſhould bring forth without travelling? And is not this a myſtery in Chriſtianity, that one ſhould believe before he hath found the pangs of the New birth? I am afraid of this, that many of us have taken up our Religion at our foot; for there are many who take up Religion before Religion take them up. But would ye know the properties of a Chriſtians Faith? *It is a begotten Faith,* 1 *Pet.* 1. 2. and not a Faith that is taken up at our pleaſure: And I would only ſay theſe two things to you, be perſwaded of this, that hypocriſie may be ſpun with a very ſmal threed: ſo that the moſt diſcerning Chriſtian cannot take up that deſperate enmity that is in them. How long did *Judas* lurk under the name of a Saint, even with theſe that were moſt diſcerning? And there is this that we would ſay, that among all theſe *that ſhall be eternally excommunicate from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power,* Hypocrites in Sion ſhall have the bitterеſt cup of Divine indignation preſented unto them. Hence it is, that Chriſt, when he would tell the worſt company that one ſhall have in hell it is alwayes that ye ſhall go to that place where hypocrites and finners are: and ſo it would be of your concernment, if by the candle of the Lord, ye would *ſtarch the inward parts of the belly, before ye go down to the grave and lie in your right hand; a deceiving heart having turned you aſide.* We confeſſe it is ſad to conſider the anxious diſappointments that many in thoſe dayes once meet with.

IV. But there is this laſt difference betwixt juſtifying Faith, and temporary Faith, That there are three precious effects of juſtifying Faith, which a temporary believer cannot win to.

1. To be denyed to all his enjoyments and attainments, and walk humbly under them, for we may say, that it is impossible for an hypocrite to be denyed to his enjoyments, he maketh such a deity of them, and worships them, or rather he worshipperh himself in them. There are three great graces that a hypocrite doth pursue after, (though he rather seeketh them as gifts than as graces :) Knowledge, Prayer, and Humility : And though it be but little that he can attain of any of the three, (or rather nothing in a saving way) yet least of all can he attain to the last, yea, we may judge that there is always within his bosom a standing conviction, that he could never win unto that gracious grace of humility. O could ye never win to this, to count your own righteousnes as filthy rags, and to rejoyce alone in the righteousnes of a crucified Saviour? I would press this upon you by the way (O Christians of this generation) forget your perfections, and remember your imperfections ; have a holy oblivion of your attainments, but have a Divine remembrace of your short comings ; look more to what is before unperfected, nor to what is behind, and thus shall you evidence true justifying Faith.

It is an effect of justifying Faith, to be under a constant and Divine impression of the preciousness of Jesus Christ, acording to that word, 1 *Pet.* 2. *To you who believe, Christ is precious* ; It is not said, that Christ was precious, or shall be precious, but it is said, *He is precious*, which doth import, (as we use to speak) a continued act ; Did ye ever know what it was to dwell twenty four hours under the impression of the marchless excellency and precious worth of a crucified Saviour ? I propose you with this ; Are there not some here (or elsewhere) that pass under the notion of Saints,

Saints, that never knew what it was to dwell half an hour under these high and elevating thoughts of preciousnes of Jesus Christ ? So that we profess we cannot tell whether we shall call him precious or undervalued: but we may conjoyn these two names together that he is precious (and yet) undervalued Christ:

3. By true justifying Faith, a Christian winneth to mortification of his invisible and predominant lusts, which is impossible for a temporary believer to win to. And is there not a great difference betwixt an Idol when it is cast out, and an Idol when it goeth out ? I will tell you the great mortification of hypocrites, the devil was living in them as one that was a black one, and now he cometh again and transformeth himself into an Angel of light : He was living in them before by his spirit of profanity, and now he liveth in them by the Spirit of hypocrisie, and counterfeiting of these things that were never clear attainments, while it is the Noble dignity of Faith, *Acts* 15. 9. *To purifie the heart*. But are there not many here who never knew what it was to mortifie one lust for Christ ? Can such a delusion overtake you, O atheists ! that ye shal reign with Christ, if ye die not with him ? There is an opinion vented in these days that there may be repentance in Heaven, and I think it would seem that the Christians of this age have much of that opinion, we are so little in repentance while we are here below : but know that Faith and Sanctification are two inseparable companions ; and let me tell you, if ye would know the comfort of the precious exercise of Faith ; It is this, that hath three great things, that it perpetually contemplates and views. 1. Faith looketh to the promise and there it doth rejoyce and rest upon it. 2. Faith looketh to the duties that are commanded, and there it cryeth out, *Here am I, I will obey and hearken*

the voice of the word. And, 3. Faith looketh to the crown, and there it doth exult and sweetly rejoyce in divine expectation. And, O what a sight is that, to behold that everlasting Prince standing at the end of our race, having a crown in his right hand, with this Motto ingraven on it. *He that persevereth to the end shal be saved?* And what a Faith, suppose ye shal it be thought, when we shal get on that immortal Crown of blessednesse? What think ye is the exercise of these that are above? O heaven, heaven, if we did know it, would we not be in an holy extasie of desire, till we were there? And blessed be he eternally, that hath purchased that precious felicity to us.

Now we shall at this time shut up our discourse, by speaking a little to these things in which a Christian doth ordinarily meet with assurance of his interest in God, and is put to the divine actings of the grace of Faith; for there are some sealing times to a Christian.

I. The first time of the sealing is, after the mortification of some predominant lust and idol, then they are admitted to read their names in these precious and ancient records of heaven, and to see (in these books) their unworthy names written by the hand of that everlasting Prince. This is clear, *Rev.* 2. 17. *To him that overcometh will I give a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, that no man knows, saving he that receiveth it.* And from that, 2 *Tim.* 4. 8. Before me, more mortification would make more bewailing; but would ye know the original of misbelief? It is the want of the exercise of spiritual mortification of our lusts. I know not where the most part of you intendeth to lodge at night, but this is certain, that we live with much contentment with our lusts, with these predominant Idols, that do so much possesse

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II. It is readily a sealing time to a Christian, when he is admitted to the divine enjoyment of these satisfying delights that are to be found in Christ: When was it that the Spouse cryed out so often, *My beloved is mine, and I am his?* Was it not when she *was brought to the banqueting house, and his banner over her was love?* Believe me, more communion with an absent Christ would make more intimation (in a divine manner) of our peace with him. We desire to bless those that are above the reach of all these disputings and questions that we are so much subject unto.

III. This is a sealing time to a Christian, when he is much in the exercise of secret prayer, and of much conversing, and corresponding with God in that duty, as is clear from that word in *Dan.* 9. 21. When *Daniel* was praying at the evening oblation, in the 23. verse, he meets with a divine intimation that is peace with God; *O man greatly beloved of God*, as the Original hath it, *O man of great desires*; for he was desirable indeed, and precious to him who holdeth the Saints in his right hand.

IV. This also is a sealing time to a Christian when he is called to the exercise of some great work, and is to be put upon some eminent holy imployment; this is clear, *Jer.* 1. 5. where *Jeremiah* being called to preach the Gospel unto such a rebellious people, that he hath his eternall election declared unto him: *Before thou wast formed in the womb, I knew thee*, Christ, as it were, giveth them that, to be meat to them for four dayes, and that in the strength of it, they may go many a dayes journey.

V. There is also another sealing time, when a Christian is first begotten to a precious and everlasting hope; for when at first Christians begin to be acquainted with Christ, even then sometimes he declareth to them his boundless and everlasting lo-

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And that is the ground why ſome of thoſe who are but babes in Chriſt, are ſo much in the exerciſe of diligence, ſo much in the exerciſe of the grace of love, and ſo much in the exerciſe of the grace of tenderneſs, it is even becauſe of the ſolemn impreſſion of their intereſt in Chriſt; that, as it were, they are dayly taken in to read their own names in legible letters in the Lambs book of life.

VI. And there is this laſt time, that is a ſealing time to a Chriſtian, and that is, when he is put under ſome ſad and afflicting diſpenſation: *when the furnace is hot ſeven times more then ordinary*: Then doth God condeſcend to manifeſt himſelf to his own. When was it that *John* met with moſt of the Reveiations of heaven? Was it not when he was in the *Iſle of Patmos, for the teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſts Kingdom, and patience of our bleſſed Lord*? Rev. 1. 9. And in that place, 2 Cor. 4. 16. *Though our outward man decay, yet our inward man is renewed day by day.*

Now we would preſs you to be more ſerious in the exerciſe of this precious grace. And I ſhal tell you the compend of Chriſtianity in theſe few words. 1. By Faith to ſolace your ſelves in Chriſts inviſible vertues and excellencies. And, 2. by hope, to be viewing that precious Crown, and theſe everlaſting digities that are to be given to the Saints. And, 3. by mortification, to be crucifying your idols. And 4. by patience, to be poſſeſſing your ſouls, until once ſhall paſs through that dark land, to that valley of everlaſting delight. And as for thoſe that contemn and undervalue the blood of this everlaſting Covenant (& I would have all thoſe that delight not in cloſing with Chriſt, and theſe who have not misbelief as their croſs to conſider this) *The wrath of the living & eternal God doth abide upon them who do not believe*, according

according to that word, *Joh.* 3. 36. *He that believeth not the wrath of God abideth on him.* It is a remarkable phraſe; becauſe of this the wrath of God will not be as a pilgrim to a misbeliever, that will turn aſide to tarry but for a night, but the wrath of God (to them who will not believe) ſhall be their houſhold companion, and ſhal dwel with them; and wo, wo to them eternally who have this ſad and everlaſting companion to abide with them, *the wrath of a living God.* There is one thing we would have theſe knowing, that among all theſe who are eternally to be debarred from Jeſus Chriſt, misbelievers are put in the foremoſt rank, *Rev.* 21. 8. There he is to put away *the fearful and unbelieving*: And from 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 18. *When Chriſt ſhall come from heaven with ten thouſand of his Saints,* (What to do) It is even *to execute vengeance on thoſe that obey not the truth of the Goſpel*: That is, who do not believe. And I poſe your own hearts with this, whether or not your names be written there in that roll; among theſe who ſhall be cut off? And that word, 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 12. *That they might be damned who believed not, but took pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs.* O but the wrath of a dying Chriſt, and of a crucified Saviour is dreadful! It is more fearful and terrible than the wrath of God ſhould have been if Chriſt had not died. I will tell you (O hypocrite in Sion) the worſt news that ever were publiſhed in your ears, and it is this, Chriſt died and roſe again (and to thoſe that are begotten to a lively hope, they are glad tidings of great joy, and therein they may comfort themſelves) but ye may wear a rough garment to deceive, and go to heaven in your own apprehenſion: But, O the ſad diſappointment that is waiting on many ſuch. And to cloſe with this, we would obteſt you, as ye would anſwer to your terrible and dreadful Judge, that ſhal ſtand one day

on his Throne, which he shall fix in the clouds, we obtest you by all the joys of Heaven, and we obtest you by all the everlasting pains of Hell, and we obtest you by all the curses that are written within the volum of this book, and by all the sweet and comfortable promises that are in this everlasting Gospel, and by the love that ye owe to your immortal souls, and as ye would not crucifie Christ afresh, believe, and imbrace the offers which are presented now unto you. Know ye whether or not this shall be the last summonds that ye shall get to believe? That so, if ye do reject it, Christ shall come from Heaven, and pronounce that sad and lamentable sentence to you, *Depart from me ye cursed, I know you not.* Now, to him that can bless these things to you, we desire to give praise.

SERMON III.

Joh. 3. 23. *This is his Commandment, that ye should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ.*

IT was a command that *Solomon* gave unto his Son, *Prov. 22. 26. That he should not be surety for debt, nor should be one of those that strickeths bands*; But, O! what spotless breaches of that mmand hath our blessed Lord Jesus committed, n he did condescend to be surety for our debt, to pay that was impossible for us to satisfie? h not Christ made a precious exchange with ers? He wreathed about his own precious neck, bond and yoke of our iniquities, and hath given us that unweariable, easie, and portable yoke his Commandments; among which this is one, *at we should believe on him.* Spotless Christ *s made sin for us*, that sinful we *might be made righteousness of God in him*: And is not this the condem-

condemnation of the world, *that we will not believe in him*? that we will not delight our selves in loving of Him (And I would say this to you, that though you would weep the one half of your days, and pray the other half. Yet, if ye want this noble grace of Faith, *Your righteousness shall be but like* a menstruous *cloath and filthy rags before him*, for what is praying without believing, but a taking of His blessed Name in vain? What is conferring upon the most divine and precious Truths of God, without believing? Is it not a lying to the Holy Ghost, and a flattering of God with our mouth? And we would have you knowing this, that there is a sweet harmony that is now made up betwixt *Moses* and Christ, betwixt the Law and the Gospel. The Law bringeth us to Christ as a Saviour, and Christ bringeth us back again to the law to be a rule of our walk, to which we must subject our selves. So then, would ye know the compend of a Christians walk? *It is a sweet travelling betwixt mount Sinai and mount Sion, betwixt Moses and Christ, betwixt the Law and the Gospel.* And we conceive that the more deep that the exercise of the Law be in a Christians conscience, before his closing with Christ, there is so much the more precious and excellent vantages waiting for him.

I. There is this advantage that waiteth on the d exercise of the Law: that it is the way to win to m establishment in the Faith, when once we begi close with Christ. O Christians, would ye k that which maketh the superstructure and buil of grace to be within you, *as a bowing wall, and tottering fence*? (So that oftentimes ye are in haz to raze the foundation) it is this, ye were not u der the exercise of the Law before your believing Jesus Christ. There are some who do not ab three days at mount *Sinai*, and these shall not d many days at mount *Sion*.

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II. There is this advantage that waiteth on the deep exerciſe of the Law, it maketh Chriſt precious to a mans ſoul. What is that which filleth the ſoul of a Chriſtian with many high and excellent thoughts of Chriſt? Is it not this, to have the Law regiſtrating our Band, and putting us (as we uſe to ſpeak) to the horn? that is, to have the Law curſing us, and uſing the ſentence of condemnation againſt us. That which maketh us have ſuch low and undervaluing thoughts of precious Chriſt, is, becauſe the moſt part of us are not acquainted with the deep and ſerious exerciſe of the Law: that is a myſtery to the moſt part of Chriſtians practice. Ye know that there were four ſtreams which went out from the Paradiſe of God, into which man was firſt placed: And ſo we may ſay, that there are four golden ſtreams, by which loſt and deſtroyed man is brought back again to this Eden and Paradiſe of everlaſting delights. Firſt, there is the precious ſtream of Chriſts righteouſneſs, by which we muſt be juſtified. And ſecondly, There is that ſtream of his Sanctification, by which we muſt be purified. Thirdly, There is that ſtream of the Wiſdom of Chriſt, by which we muſt be conducted through this wilderneſs wherein we have loſt our way. And fourthly, There is the ſtream of Chriſts Redemption, by which we muſt be delivered from the power of our enemies, and muſt turn the battel at the gate. It is by the Redemption of Chriſt that we ſhall once ſing that triumphant Song, *O death, where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory?* O but all theſe ſtreams will be ſweet and refreſhing to a ſoul that is hotly purſued by the Law. So long as we ſee not the uglineſs of our leproſie in the glaſs of the Law, we have our own *Abana* and *Parphar*, that we think may do our turn: but when once our caſe is truly laid open to us, then will we be content to waſh our ſelves in *Jordan* ſeven times. III. There

III. There is this advantage that waiteth on the deep exerciſe of the Law, that it maketh a Chriſtian live conſtantly under the impreſſion of the ſinfulneſs of ſin. What is it that maketh ſin exceeding ſinful to a Chriſtian? Is it not this, He hath been fourty days in *Moſes* School? And we conceive that the ground why ſuch fools as we make a mock of ſin, is becauſe we know not what it is to be under the power of his wrath and the apprehenſions of the indignation of God.

But now to come to that which we intend to ſpeak of: We told you, at the firſt occaſion that we ſpake upon theſe words, that there were many excellent things concerning the grace of Faith, holden forth in them. The firſt thing (which was holden forth concerning this radical grace of Faith) was the infinite advantage that redoundeth to a Chriſtian through the exerciſe of Faith, and giving obedience to this command: which we cleared to be holden forth, not only from the ſcope, but alſo from the nature of this command. And now to ſpeak a little to the point, we ſhall propoſe theſe conſiderations, that may abundantly ſhew how advantagious a thing this excellent grace of Faith is.

I. The firſt conſideration, that ſpeaketh it, is this, That Faith maketh Chriſt precious to a ſoul, according to that word, 1 *Pet.* 2. 7. *To you that believe Chriſt is precious.* And we would have you knowing this, that Faith maketh Chriſt more precious to a ſoul, nor ſenſe, or any other thing can make him. And firſt, Faith maketh Chriſt more precious nor ſenſe, becauſe the eſtimation which the grace of Faith hath of Chriſt, it is builded upon the excellency of his Perſon: but the eſtimation of ſenſe it is builded upon the excellency of his actings: ſo that, becauſe he is ſuch to them, therefore they love and eſteem him.

But that Heroick grace of Faith, it taketh up the excellency of Christs person, and that maketh him precious to them. Secondly, Faith maketh Christ more precious then sense, because sense looketh to that love which Christ manifesteth in his face, and in his hands, and in his feet: but Faith looketh to that love which is in his heart. Sense will cry forth, *who is like to thee? whose countenance is like Lebanon, excellent as the Cedar: whose hands are as gold rings, set with Beryl, and whose legs are like pillars of Marble set in sockets of Gold.* Sense will look to the similings of Christ, and will wonder; it will look to his dispensations and actings, and will be constrained to cry out, *who is like unto thee?* But the grace of Faith solaceth it self in the Fountain from whence all these springs and sweet inundations of love do flow. Thirdly, Faith maketh Christ more precious then Sense; because Faith looketh not only to what Christ is presently; but unto what Christ is from eternity before time, and what Christ shall be unto eternity after time; But sense only doth look to what Christ is presently. And ye must conceive, that the sweet travellings of Faith betwixt infinite love from eternity before, and infinite love unto eternity after, must make Faith to fall in a sea of wondering, and raiseth the thoughts to the highest pitch of desire and estimation. Fourthly, we may likewise add, that the impression of the graciousness of Christ, which sense maketh upon the soul, is not so constant, nor so single, as that which Faith doth make. O but the grace of Faith giveth the Christian a broad look of Christ, and letteth him see Christ cloathed with ornaments of glory and divine Majesty. Sense followeth Christ, rather that it may see his miracles and love, that it may be fed with loaves; but Faith follows Christ, for himself above all.

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II. The second consideration, to speak the advantage of it, is, that the grace of Faith, it hath, as it were, an arbitrary power with God; so that *whatsoever a Christian shall seek in Faith, he shall receive it.* It is the noble gift that was once given to Faith, that it never should seek any thing and be denied, according to that word in *Matt.* 21. 22. *And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive it.* And that word in *Joh.* 15. 7. *Abide in me,* that is, believe; and the *promise* is annexed to this: *Whatsoever ye shall ask ye shall receive.* And it is clear likewise from the preceeding verse to our Text, that if we obey this command of Faith, *whatsoever we shall ask of God, we shall receive it.* And I would speak these two things to you from this. First, that oftentimes Christ putteth a blank in a Christians hand who is much in the exercise of Faith, according to that in *Matth.* 20. 32. Is there not an ample blank put into that mans hand? *What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?* Christ desireth him to fill up that blank with what he would. And secondly, there is this, which is one of the greatest steps of Christs matchless condescendency, that oftentimes when his own have sought in their presumption a blank to be put in their hand, Christ condescendeth to give it, according to that strange passage in *Mark* 10. 35, 36. the two Disciples who present this desire to Christ, We desire, say they, *that whatsoever we ask, thou should give it unto us.* And presently that is answered, *what will ye that I should do for you?* Christ hath an infinite good will to satisfie the desires of his own: and that which yet more speaketh our Christs boundless good will to satisfie the desires of all that belong to him, it may be cleared in that word, *John* 16. 24. where he chargeth his Disciples with this: *Hither to,* saith he, *have ye asked me nothing;* ye must not suppose that *Peter, James* and *John* never sought a

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ſuite of Chriſt; but the meaning of that expreſſion, is this: Ye ſought nothing in compariſon of that which I was willing to give, and which your neceſſity did call for at my hands, which ye ſhould have ſought.

III. There is this third conſideration, to point out the advantage of Faith: it is that grace that keepeth all the graces of theSpirit in life and exerciſe, Faith is that higher wheel,at the motion of which, all the lower wheels do move: if ſo we may ſpeak, Faith is that *Primum mobile*, that firſt moves and turns about all the lower graces of the Spirit,according to that, 2 *Pet.* 1. 5. *Add to your Faith, vertue, and to your vertue, patience, and to your patience, brotherly kindneſs.* Firſt, the grace of Faith keepeth in exerciſe the grace of love, as is clear *Eph.* 3. 17. where theſe two graces are conjoyned. As likewiſe from *Rom.* 5. 1. compared with *verſe* 5. *Being juſtified by Faith.* Then this effect followeth upon it, *the love of God is ſhed abroad in our hearts.* And ſo it is certain, that Faith keepeth love in life. Faith being the ſpy of the ſoul, and that intelligencer and precious meſſenger: it goeth out and bringeth in objects unto love. Faith draweth aſide the vail,and love ſitteth down and ſolaceth it ſelf in the diſcoveries of Faith. Secondly, the grace of Faith likewiſe it keepeth the grace of mortification in exerciſe, as is clear, not only from *Eph.* 6. 6. but from 1 *John* 5. 4. *This is our victory whereby we overcome the world, even our Faith.* And it is certain that Faith keepeth mortification in exerciſe, and advanceth holineſs, not only becauſe of this, that Faith is that grace that preſenteth to a Chriſtian the abſolute purity and ſpotleſs holineſs of Jeſus Chriſt; but alſo becauſe it maketh them eſteem their Idols taſtleſs as the white of an egg, and they become unto them as their ſorrowful meat. The beſt principle of mortification is this,

this, the diſcoveries of the inviſible vertues of Jeſus Chriſt: that mortification which ariſeth from the lovely diſcoveries of the excellency of Jeſus Chriſt, is moſt real and abiding; as theſe waters which riſe from the higheſt ſprings, are not only conſtant, but likewiſe moſt deep and excellent. Thirdly, Faith likewiſe hath influence upon mortification, as it doth take hold of that infinite ſtrength that is in Chriſt, by which a Chriſtian is inabled to mortifie his corruptions. Fourthly, Faith likewiſe maketh application *of the blood of ſprinkling*, by which we are purified from dead works. Fifthly, Likewiſe the grace of Faith keepeth in exerciſe the grace of Humility, as is clear, *Rom.* 3. 27. *By what law,* ſaith he, *is boaſting excluded? It is not by the law of works, but by the law of Faith.* Sixthly, Faith keepeth in exerciſe the grace of joy, as is clear, *Rom.* 15. 13. *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.* So that ye ſee the proper fruit of Faith, is *joy in the holy Ghoſt.* And certainly, did we believe more, we ſhould rejoyce more. Seventhly, and laſtly, Faith keepeth in exerciſe the grace of hope, for it is impoſſible for hope to be in lively exerciſes, except Faith once be exerciſed, which may be a ſhame unto you; for how can we hope to attain the thing that is promiſed, except our Faith firſt cloſe with the promiſe? So there is this difference betwixt the grace of Faith, and the grace of Hope; the grace of Faith cloſeth with the promiſes; but the grace of Hope, cloſeth with the thing that is promiſed.

IV. There is this fourth Conſideration, that may ſpeak out the excellency of the grace of Faith; it is that grace by which a Chriſtian doth attain to moſt divine fellowſhip, and conſtant correſpondency with Heaven. Would ye have that queſtion reſolved and determined, What is the beſt way, *Not to ſtir up my beloved, nor awake him until he pleaſe.* It is this,

much in the grace of Faith: this is clear from *Eph.* 3. 17. *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by Faith:* By the exercise of all other graces, Christ is but a sojourner, *That turneth aside to tarry but for a night;* but by the exercise of this grace, he cometh to take up house with us, I will tell you what Faith is. It is a ladder that reacheth between Heaven and Earth: by the steps of which, a Christian doth daily go up to Heaven, and converse with the higher House. Faith is that grace, (as the Apostle speaketh) by which we have access to the Throne of his grace. Faith ushers in the Believer to the Throne: and without it he cannot have access there, nor joy when he is there.

V. Here is this advantage that attendeth the exercise of Faith; A believing Christian is a praying Christian: according to that word in *Mark* 9. 24. where these two are conjoyned together, *Lord, I believe*: and then he falleth to his prayer presently after that confession, *Help thou my unbelief.* And it is clear from *Psal.* 63. 1. *O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee, my soul thirsteth for thee.* And sometimes Faith is a most impatient grace: but we may always say of it, that it is a most diligent grace. Oh is it not the neglect of this precious exercise of faith and of the duty of secret Prayer, that makes our leanness testifie to our Face, and maketh our souls as a barren wilderness? I am perswaded of this, that since Christ had any followers, and since ever this everlasting Gospel was preached in Paradise, the exercise of secret prayer was never so much neglected. We have turned over all our prayers into complements with God. We know not what it is *to rise at mid-night and call upon God, and to inquire after our Maker under the silent watches of the night.* O but it is a sweet diversion from sleep, to retire our selves (in the silent seasons of the night) from all thoughts about worldly matters, and to converse with that invisible Majesty.

VI. There

VI. There is this sixth consideration to point out the advantage of Faith: That Faith is that grace that doth facilitate a Christians obedience, and maketh it most pleasant and easie; This is clear from *Heb.* 1. 8. *By Faith Abraham, when commanded to go to a strange land, obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went.* The word may be rendred, *He did chearfully obey.* And ver. 17. *By faith he offered up his only Son.* Would ye know the reason why his commands are your burden, and why his precepts are your crosses? It is because of this, *Ye do not believe:* And so it is most certain, that it is impossible for a Christian to attain to a pleasant way of obedience, without the exercise of Faith. Faith holdeth up the Crown to a Christian, and this crown maketh him to obey. Faith gathereth strength from Christ, and that strength maketh obedience very easie. Faith taketh up the excellency of Christ, and this maketh a Christian to look upon his duty, more as his dignity, than his duty. And we are perswaded of this, that our chariot-wheel should move more swiftly (*like the chariots of Aminadab*) if we were more in the exercise of the grace of Faith. Would ye know an answer to that question, What is first most requisite for a Christian while here below? Faith; And what secondly is most requisite? Faith; And what thirdly is most requisite for a Christian? even Faith, Faith above all things, and above all things, Faith.

VII. There is another advantage of it, that by Faith our service and prayers are accepted of God. Would ye know what is the prayer of a Christian that is not in Faith? *It is a smoak in his nostrils, and a fire that burneth all the day. The unbelievers sacrifice is an abomination to the Lord.* This is clear from *Heb.* 11. 4. *By faith* Abel *offered up unto God a more acceptable sacrifice then* Cain; and we conceive that there are many unanswered prayers which we do

up, becauſe we want that noble exerciſe of Faith.

VIII. And laſtly, we ſhall likewiſe add this, that Faith is the grace by which a Chriſtian hath that perfect and immediate ſight (as it were) of great things that are promiſed to him; Faith bringeth a Chriſtian within ſight of Heaven, and Faith bringeth a Chriſtian within ſight of God, according to that word, *Heb.* 11. 1. *Faith is the evidence of things not ſeen*: And that noble paradox, that is ſaid of Faith, *Heb.* 11. 27. *By faith Moſes ſaw him that is inviſible.* Is it not an impoſſible thing, to ſee that, which cannot be ſeen? But the meaning of it is this, That Faiths diſcoveries of God, are as certain and ſure as the diſcoveries of our bodily eyes are: Faith is an intelligent grace; yea, it is a moſt ſure and infallible grace; What will Faith not do? And what can ye do who want Faith?

Now to enforce the advantages and excellencies of Faith a little more, we ſhall propoſe to you the diſadvantages of that woful ſin of unbelief.

I. There is this diſadvantage of the ſin of unbelief, that all the actions that proceed from an unbeliever, they are impure and defiled, according to that *Tit.* 1. 15. *But unto them that are defiled, and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conſcience is defiled. Their prayer is unclean*: yea, (as Solomon ſpeaketh) *their plowing is ſin*: yea, their doing about the moſt excellent duties (for matter) is an abomination to God, according to that word, *Rom.* 14. 23. *What ever is not of Faith, is ſin.* So the want of Faith is the great polluter of all our actions and of all our performances.

II. There is this ſecond diſadvantage of misbelief, that it is impoſſible for one in the exerciſe of unbelief, to mortifie a luſt or idol: and we may allude to theſe words in *Matth.* 17. 20. When his diſciples came to him and asked this queſtion, *why could*

could we not caſt out this devil? That was given as an anſwer, *becauſe of your unbelief*: Unbelief is that which taketh up arms for our idols; and doth moſt ſtrongly defend them: for there is nothing that will kill corruption ſo much, as the exerciſe of Faith: and when that is laid aſide, we have laid by our weapons, and have in a manner concluded a treaty of peace with our idols, that we ſhall not offend them, if they offend not us.

III. There is this diſadvantage that waiteth upon the ſin of unbelief, that ſuch an one cannot win nor attain to the grace of *eſtabliſhment, but is always as the waves of the ſea, toſſed to and fro*, until once he win to the exerciſe of Faith, as is clear from *Iſa.* 7. 2. *Except ye believe, ye ſhall not be eſtabliſhed.*

IV. There is this diſadvantage that waiteth on it; it is the mother of hardneſs and ſtupidity of heart, according to that word in *Mark* 16. 14. Where he upbraideth them becauſe of their unbelief: and then what danger followeth, to wit, *hardneſs of heart*: this is clear alſo from *Acts* 19. 9. Where theſe two ſiſter-devils are ſo conjoyned and locked together, *unbelief and hardneſs of heart*, becauſe it is unbelief indeed, that hindreth all the graces, by which the grace of tenderneſs muſt be maintained.

V. There is this diſadvantage in the ſin of unbelief, that it is big with child of apoſtacy from God, and of defection from him, according to that word *Heb.* 3. 11. *Beware leſt there be in any of you, an evil heart of unbelief*, (and there the fruit of it) *to depart from the living God.* And certainly it is no wonder, that unbelief travel in birth, till the curſed child of Apoſtacy be brought forth; not only becauſe of this, that an unbeliever loſeth the thoughts of the excellency of Chriſt, but alſo becauſe he increaſeth in his thoughts of love toward his idols: for Chriſt doth decreaſe in thoſe who [be]li[eve]

believe, and their idols do increaſe in their love, and in their deſires, and in their eſtimation.

VI. There is this ſixth diſadvantage in the ſin of unbelief, it hindereth the communication of many ſignal workings and tokens of the love and favour of the moſt High, according to that ſad word that is in *Mat.* 13. 58. at the cloſe, *He could not do many mighty works there becauſe of their unbelief.* Unbelief, as it were, laid a reſtraint on Chriſt, that he could not effectuate theſe things which he was willing to perform. And (to ſhut up our diſcourſe at this time) I would only add theſe two aggravations, which may ſomewhat enforce what we have ſpoken; (I ſay) there are theſe two aggravations in the ſin of unbelief, even in his own who have a right (and alſo his call) to believe: 1. That after Chriſt hath given moſt ſenſible diſcoveries of himſelf, *wherein ye have ſeen him*, as it were, *face to face*, yet we will not believe: this is clear from *Joh.* 6. 36. *Though ye have ſeen me*, ſaith Chriſt, *yet ye do not believe in me.* There is not a manifeſtation of Chriſts preſence, but it is a witneſs againſt you, becauſe of your unbelief. Would ye hear the voice of ſenſe, that is rectified? It is this, believe on the Son of God. Secondly, That notwitſtanding of the ſignal demonſtrations of the power of Chriſt, yet, though it were the mortifying of ſome luſt and idol within them, yet they will not believe, but upon new temptations will doubt of his love to them. Chriſt preacheth Faith, by his Word, He preacheth faith by his ſufferings, He preacheth faith by his diſpenſations, He preacheth faith by his promiſes, He preacheth faith by his rods; and if theſe five inſtruments will not ingage your hearts to believe, what can move them? Do not his two wounds in his precious hands, preach out this point of Faith, believe him: Doth not that hole opened

ed in his ſide, preach this Doctrine, *That we ſhould believe in him?* And theſe two wounds, that he received in his precious feet, do they not preach this, *That we ſhould believe on a crucified Saviour?* And we would only ſay this, that ſometime it is the caſe of his own, that after the convictions of this, that it is their duty to believe, and alſo after ſome deſires to cloſe with Chriſt, yet they find inability to cloſe with him. Is it not certain that to will (*to believe*) is ſometime preſent with you; but how to perform ye know not? And I would have a Chriſtian making this fourfold uſe of ſuch a diſpenſation as that, (which is moſt ordinarily) when convictions of our duty to believe, and ſome deſires to cloſe with Chriſt, is not followed with actual performances.

1. To ſtudy to have your convictions more deeply rooted within you; for it doth ſometimes follow, that reſolutions and mints to believe, are not bleſt with actual believing; becauſe the conviction of our duty to believe, is not deeply imprinted upon our conſcience.

2. Be convinced of that deſperate enmity (*and that myſtery of iniquity*) that is within you, that ye can have ſome will to do, without ability to perform. We confeſs, it is not an ordinary diſeaſe in theſe days, to have ſuch a contrariety betwixt a Chriſtians will and his practice, our will for the moſt part being no better then our practice; But ſometime it is, which may make you cry forth, *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from this body of death?*

3. That ye would be much in the imploying of Chriſt, that as he hath given you to will, ſo alſo he might make you to do. Chriſt is about to convince his own in ſuch a diſpenſation as that, *That faith is the gift of God.* Faith is ſo noble a grace, that

it cannot be ſpinned out from our reſolutions, nor from our endeavours; Faith is ſuch a divine plant, *as the Fathers right hand muſt plant in our ſouls.*

4. Let it convince you of the excellency of the grace of Faith (for the difficulty of attaining to any thing may ſpeak out the excellency of that thing) there is no ſin but it may be eaſily win at; There is an eaſineſs and facility to overtake the paths of our idols: but the graces of the Spirit are ſo excellent things, that we muſt fight before we attain them. And you who are ſtrangers to Chriſt Jeſus (and have never known what it is to cloſe with him) we would requeſt you in Chriſts Name to be reconciled to him. What know ye, O men, (or rather Atheiſts) but this ſhall be the laſt ſummonds that ye ſhall get to believe? And that becauſe ye diſobey this precious ſummonds; there ſhall be one preſented to you that ye cannot ſir. I remember of one man, who looking upon many thouſands that were under his command, weeped over them, when he conſidered how that within a few years all theſe ſhould be laid in their graves, and ſhould be in eternity. O but it were much of our concernment, to be trying our ſelves how it is with us. We are not afraid that it is a breach of charity, to wiſh that but one of each ten that are within theſe doors, were heirs of the grace of life, and had the ſolid and ſpiritual expectation of heaven. I think, if Chriſt were to come preſently to ſpeak to us; he might not only ſay to each twelve that are here, *One of you ſhall betray me*: but we are afraid, that he would ſay to each twelve that are here, *Eleven of you ſhall betray me, and but one only ſhall paſs free.* O doth it not concern you, to inquire where ye ſhall reſt at night, when the long ſhadow of the everlaſting evening ſhall be ſtretched out upon you? I think there are ſome that are ſo ſettled upon their lees, that if they were one

one day in Hell, and ſaw all the torments that are there, and were brought from it the next day to live on earth, they would not repent. And more, there are ſome, that take them up one day to ſee the joyes of Heaven, and bring them back again, they would not purſue after theſe bleſſed and everlaſting enjoyments. O is not Chriſt much undervalued by us? But I muſt tell you this, *One wo is paſt, but behold another wo is faſt coming.* O the ſcreighing of theſe ſpirits that are entred into their everlaſting priſon-houſe, out of which there is no redemption. What ſhall be your choice, when Chriſt ſhall come in the clouds? I am perſwaded, there are many, to whom at that day, this Doctrine would be raviſhing, *viz. That there were not a death, that there were not a God, and that there were not an eternity.* Oh! will ye believe *That the ſword of the juſtice of God is bathed in Heaven, and ſhall come down to make a ſacrifice not in the land of* Idumea, *nor in the land of* Bozra; *but he is to make a ſacrifice among his people who ſeemed to make a Covenant with him by ſacrifice.* Ah, ah, ſhall we ſay that? If that argument were uſed to many, that within fourty days they ſhould be at their long and everlaſting home, they would yet ſpend thirty nine of theſe days in taking pleaſure upon their luſts. I am perſwaded of this, that there are many who think that the way betwixt Heaven and Earth, is but one days journey; they think he can believe in one day, and triumph at night: But O! it ſhall be a ſhort triumphing that ſuch Believers as theſe ſhall have. Therefore, O ſtudy to cloſe with a crucified Saviour, reſt on him by Faith, delight your ſelves in him, love, and let your ſelves be longing for the day when that voice ſhall be heard in heaven, (and O how ſweetly ſhall it be ſung!) *Ariſe, ariſe, ariſe, my love, my dove, my fair one, and come away: for behold your winter is paſt, your everlaſting ſummer is*

and the time of the ſinging of birds is near : When Chriſt ſhall come over theſe mountains of *Bether*, he ſhall cry, *Behold I come* : and the ſoul ſhall ſweetly anſwer, *Come bleſſed Lord Jeſus, come*, O what a life ſhall it be : that with theſe two arms ye ſhould eternally incircle Chriſt, and hold him in your arms, or rather be incircled by him? *wait for him, for he ſhall come, and his reward is with him*, and he ſhall once take home the wearied travellers of hope.

SERMON IV.

1 Joh. 3. 23. *This is his Commandment, that ye ſhould believe on the Name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt*, &c.

THere are two great and excellent gifts, which God in the depth of his boundleſs love hath beſtowed on his own. Firſt, There is that infinite gift and royal donation, his own beloved Son, Jeſus Chriſt, which is called, *The gift of God*, *Joh.* 4. 10. And ſecondly, There is that excellent gift of the grace of Faith, which God hath beſtowed upon his own, which is alſo called, *The gift of God*, Epheſ. 2. 8. *Faith is the gift of God.* And is it not certain, that theſe two gracious gifts ought to ingage our ſouls and hearts much unto him? Infinite Majeſty could give no gift greater than his Son, and infinite poverty could receive no richer gift ſo ſuitable as Chriſt; It was the moſt valuable gift that heaven could give, and it is the greatest advantage for earth to receive it. And we could wiſh that the moſt part of the ſtudy and practice of men (that is ſpent in purſuit after theſe low and inſufficient vanities) might be once taken up in that precious purſuit after CHRIST. We could wiſh that all the queſtions and debates of the time were turned over into that ſoul-concerning queſtion, *What ſhall we do to be ſaved?* and that all the queſtions,

ons, controverſies, and contentions of the time were turned over into that divine contention and heavenly debate, *who ſhould be moſt for Chriſt, who ſhould be moſt for exalting of the noble and excellent plant of renown*, and that all our judging and ſearchings of other mens practices and eſtate might be turned over into that uſeful ſearch, to *prove and examine our ſelves whether we be in the Faith or not.* And I would ask you this queſtion, what are your thoughts concerning precious Chriſt, ſeeing he is that noble object of Faith? We would only have you taking along theſe things, by which Chriſt may be much commended to your hearts: Firſt, There was never any that with the eyes of Faith did behold the matchleſs beauty and tranſcendent worth of that crucified Saviour, that returned his enemy. There is ſoul-conquering vertue in the face of Chriſt, and there is a heart-captivating and overcoming power in the beauty of Jeſus Chriſt. This firſt ſight that ever perſecuting *Saul* got of Chriſt, it brought him unto an endleſs captivity of love. Secondly, There is this that we would ſay of precious Chriſt, which may engage our ſouls unto Him, that for all the wrongs Believers do to Chriſt, yet hath He never an evil word of them to his Father, but commends them: which is clear from that of *Joh.* 17. 6. where Chriſt doth commend the Diſciples to the Father for the grace of obedience, *They have keeped thy Word*, and for the grace of Faith, *verſ.* 8. *They have believed that thou didſt ſend me*: And yet were not the Diſciples moſt defective in obedience, both in that *That they did not take up their Croſs and follow Chriſt*: and alſo in that, they did not adhere to Him in the day that He was brought to *Cajaphas* hall? and were they not moſt defective in the grace of Faith? as is clear from *Matth.* 17. 17. and likewiſe from *Joh.* 14. 1. He is preſſing them to believe in Him,

yet he doth commend them to the Father, as moſt perfect in theſe things. Thirdly, There is this that we would laſtly ſay of Him who is the noble object of Faith, look to the eminent depths of Chriſts condeſcendency, and then ye will be provoked to love Him. Was it not infinite love that made Chriſt to ly three days in the grave, that we might be through all the ages of Eternity with Him? Was it not infinite condeſcendency that made His precious head wear a Crown of thorns, that we might eternally wear a crown of Glory? Was it not infinite condeſcendency that made Chriſt wear a purple robe, that ſo we might wear that precious robe of the righteouſneſs of the Saints? And was it not matchleſs condeſcendency, that Chriſt, who knew no ſin, was made ſin for us, and like unto us, that ſo we might become like unto him, and be made the righteouſneſs of God in Him.

But to come to that which we intend mainly to ſpeak upon at this time, which is that ſecond thing that we propoſed to ſpeak of from theſe words: and that is concerning the excellency of this grace of Faith, which we cleared was holden out in that, that faith was called his commandment, which is ſo called by way of eminency and excellency. There are many things in Scripture, which may ſweetly point out the precious excellency of this grace of Faith, and we ſhall only ſpeak to theſe things.

1. The firſt thing that ſpeaketh out the excellency of Faith is this, it exerciſeth it ſelf upon a moſt noble object (to wit) Jeſus Chriſt: Faith and love being the two arms of the immortal ſoul, by which we do imbrace a crucified Saviour, which is often pointed at in Scripture: and we ſhall point at theſe three principal acts of Faith, which it exerciſeth on Jeſus Chriſt as the Object of it.

The firſt is, to make up an Union betwixt Chriſt

Chriſt and the Believer (Faith being indeed an uniting grace, and that which knitteth the members to the head) and to make this more fully appear, we would point out a little what ſweet harmony and correſpondency there is betwixt theſe two ſiſter-graces, (to wit) faith and love. Faith is that nail, which faſteneth the Soul to Chriſt, and love is that grace which driveth that nail to the head; Faith at firſt taketh but a tender grip of Chriſt, and then love cometh in and maketh the ſoul take a more ſure grip of him. Secondly, Ye may ſee that harmony in this; Faith is that grace which taketh hold (as it were) *of the garments of Chriſt, and of his Word*; but love (that ambitious grace) it taketh hold of the heart of Chriſt, and, as it were, his heart doth melt in the hand of love. Thirdly, It may be ſeen in this, Faith is that grace, which draweth the firſt draught of the likeneſs and image of Chriſt upon a ſoul, but that (accompliſhing) grace of love, it doth compleat theſe firſt draughts and theſe imperfect lineaments of Chriſts Image, which were firſt drawn on the ſoul. Fourthly, By faith and love the heart of Chriſt and of the Believer are ſo united, that they are no more two, but one Spirit.

2. There is this ſecond act that Faith exerciſeth on Chriſt, and it is in diſcovering the matchleſs excellencies, and the tranſcendent properties of Jeſus Chriſt. O what large and precious commentary doth faith make upon Chriſt? It is indeed that faithful ſpy, which doth always bring up a good report of him. Hence it is that Faith is called *underſtanding*, Coloſ. 2. 2. Becauſe it is that grace, which revealeth much of the precious truth of that noble Object.

3. And there is this third noble act of Faith exerciſing it ſelf upon Chriſt, *viz.* It maketh Chriſt precious to the ſoul according to that word,

2. 17. *Unto you which believe, he is precious.* And if there were no other thing to ſpeak forth its worth, but that, it is more then ſufficient: for no doubt this is the exerciſe of the higher Houſe, to be dwelling on the contemplation of Chriſts beauty, and to have their ſouls tranſported with love towards him; and with joy in him. Reaſon and amazement are ſeldom companions, but here they do ſweetly joyn together; Firſt, a Chriſtian loveth Chriſt becauſe of Chriſts actings; and then he loveth all theſe actings becauſe they come from Chriſt.

II. Now ſecondly, this pointeth out the precious excellency of the grace of Faith, it is that grace which is moſt myſterious and ſublime in its actings, it hath a more divine and ſublime way of acting then any other grace; Hence it is called, *The myſtery of Faith*, which ſpeaketh this, that the actings of Faith are myſteries to the moſt part of the world, and I ſhall only point at theſe things which may ſpeak out the myſterious actings of the grace of Faith.

1. Faith can believe, and fix it ſelf on a word of promiſe, although ſenſe, reaſon and probability, ſeem to contradict the accompliſhment of that promiſe: Faith it walketh not by the low dictates of ſenſe and reaſon; but by a higher rule, (to wit) *the ſure word of prophecy*, which is clear from *Rom.* 4. 19. *Where Abraham believed the promiſe*, notwithſtanding that ſenſe and reaſon ſeemed to contradict it: *He conſidered not the deadneſs of his own body, neither the barrenneſs of Sarahs womb, but was ſtrong in the Faith, giving glory to God:* As it is clear from *Heb.* 11. 29, 30. Where Faith believed *their paſſing through the red ſea, as through dry ground*, which was moſt contrary to ſenſe and reaſon: *Faith believed the falling down of the walls of Jericho, by the blowing of horns.* Which things were moſt impoſſible to ſenſe and reaſon; for ſenſe will oftentimes

oftentimes cry out, *All men are liars*; And reaſon will ſay, *How can ſuch a thing be?* And yet that Heroick grace of Faith cryeth out, *Hath he ſpoken it? He will alſo do it. Hath he ſaid it? Then it ſhall come to paſſe.*

2. Faith can believe a word of promiſe, notwithſtanding that the diſpenſations of God ſeem to contradict it; as was clear in *Job*, who profeſſed, *He would truſt in God though he ſhould kill him.* And no doubt, but this was the practice of believing *Jacob*, he truſted that that promiſe ſhould be accompliſhed, *That the elder ſhould ſerve the younger*, though all the diſpenſations of God, (which he did meet with) ſeemed to ſay, that promiſe ſhould not be accompliſhed.

3. Faith can believe a word of promiſe, even when the Commands of God ſeem to contradict the accompliſhment of that promiſe: This is clear in that ſingular inſtance of *Abrahams* Faith, that notwithſtanding he was commanded to kill his promiſed ſeed (upon whom did depend the accompliſhment of the promiſes) yet he believed that the promiſes ſhould be performed. And though there were indeed extraordinary and ſtrange tryals of his Faith, as he had natural affections to wreſtle with; yet over the belly of all theſe, believing *Abraham*, he giveth faith to the promiſe, and bringeth his *Iſaac* to the Altar; (though he did receive him back again) this is clear from, *Heb.* 11. 17, 18, 19.

4. Faith can exerciſe it ſelf upon the promiſe, notwithſtanding that challenges and convictions of worthineſs and guilt do wait on the Chriſtian; This is clear, 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. That although *his houſe was not ſo with God as did become*, yet he believed the promiſe: As likewiſe, it is clear from *Pſa.* 65. 3. *Iniquities did prevail againſt me*: and yet that doth not interrupt his Faith, but he ſaith, *As for our tranſgreſ-*

ſions,

ſions, thou ſhalt purge them away. And certainly, it were a noble and precious act of Faith to believe, notwithſtanding of unanſwerable challenges of guilt; the beſt way both to crucifie our Idols, and to anſwer theſe challenges, is believing, *and hoping againſt hope*, and cloſing with Chriſt: This is moſt clear from *Iſa.* 64. 6, 7. compared with *verſ.* 8. where after ſtrange challenges, the Prophet hath a ſtrange word, *But now, O Lord, thou art our Father.* There is an Emphaſis in the word (now) for all this, *yet thou art* (now) *our Father.*

5. And laſtly, this pointeth out the myſterious acting of the grace of Faith, that it exerciſeth it ſelf upon an inviſible object, even upon Chriſt not yet ſeen, according to that word, 1 *Pet.* 5. 8. *whom having not ſeen, yet ye love, in whom though now ye ſee him not, yet believing,* &c. I poſe the greater part of you who are here, whether or not theſe be two of the greateſt Paradoxes and myſteries unto you? For is not this a myſtery to love him whom we never ſaw? *Whom having not ſeen, yet love*: To love an abſent and unſeen Chriſt, is a myſtery to the moſt part of the world: and is not this a myſtery, to believe on him whom we never ſaw, *In whom, though ye ſee him not, yet believing.* And I ſhall add this, that Faith can hold faſt its intereſt with God, notwithſtanding the moſt precious Chriſtian ſhould call us Hypocrites, and not acknowledge us: this is clear in the practice of *Job*; And moſt clear from that word, *Iſa.* 63. 16. *Doubtleſs thou art our Father, though* Abraham *be ignorant of us, and* Iſrael *acknowledge us not.*

III. Thirdly, this pointeth out the excellency of the grace of Faith, that Faith, (when it is in exerciſe) is that grace by which a Chriſtian doth attain unto moſt ſenſible enjoyments. There is a great queſtion that is much debated among Chriſtians, what is the

the way to win this happy length, to be always under the ſweet and refreſhing influence of heaven, and to have his dew always coming down upon our branches? I can give no anſwer to it, but this, be much in the exerciſe of Faith: This is clear from that notion and name put upon Faith, *Iſa.* 45. 22. It is called a look to Chriſt, which is a moſt ſenſible act. If ye would know a deſcription of Faith, It is this, *The divine contemplation of the immortal ſoul, upon that divine, excellent, and precious object, Jeſus Chriſt.* For God never made Faith a liar, and therefore its eye is never off him that is the noble object of Faith, Jeſus Chriſt manifeſted in the Goſpel: as it is clear, *Epheſ.* 1. 13. *After ye believed ye were ſealed with the holy Spirit of promiſe,* which preacheth out the excellent enjoyments theſe had after their cloſing with Chriſt who is inviſible. Our Faith is called a ſeeing, which ſpeaketh out this, that Faith is ſight of God, is as certain as if we did behold him with our eyes, as is clear, *Heb.* 11. 27. *Moſes ſaw him by Faith who is inviſible.* And we conceive that the ground which maketh the moſt part of us have ſuch complaints, *How long, wilt thou forget us for ever?* It is this, the want of the Spiritual exerciſe of Faith: and are there not ſome here who may cry out, *It is more then thirty days ſince I did behold the King*; Yea, there are ſome who may go a greater length, and cry out, *I have lived theſe two years at Jeruſalem, and yet I have not ſeen the Kings face?* Yea, there are ſome here whoſe complaint may go a little higher, and cry forth, *Theſe three years and ſix moneths it hath not rained on me,* but the clouds have been reſtrained and bound up, and the Heavens have become braſs. And would you know the riſe of theſe complaints, it is this, ye are not much in the Spiritual exerciſe of Faith. And to you I would only ſay theſe two words. Firſt, It is eaſier to perſwade

perſwade a reprobate that he is defective in the fear of God, and in his love to God, then to perſwade ſome ſuch, that they are wanting to God in their Faith; for they hold faſt that piece of deſperate iniquity till they die. Secondly, We would ſay to theſe of you who have the valley of *Achor* for a door of hope, and have taſted of the ſweetneſs of Chriſt, ſome of you will be leſs convinced, for the neglect of the duty of Faith, then for neglect of the duty of Prayer, or of the duty of keeping the Sabbath day. But I am perſwaded of this, that if the noble worth of that transcendent object were known, we would have a holy impatience, until once we did believe.

IV. Fourthly, This pointeth out the excellency of the grace of Faith, It is that grace by which a Chriſtian is advanced to the higheſt and moſt inconceivable pitch of dignity, and that is, to be the child of the living God: As is clear, *Joh.* 1. 12. *To as many as received (or believed in him) he gave power or prerogative to become the ſons of God.* And certainly that noble prerogative of Adoption is much undervalued by many: And I will tell you two grounds whereon the moſt part of men undervalue that excellent gift of Adoption: Firſt, They do not take up the infinite highneſs of God (and what a one He is) otherwiſe they would cry out with David, *Seemeth it a ſmall thing in your eyes to be a ſon to the King of kings?* Secondly, We do not take up, nor underſtand theſe matchleſs Priviledges which are given to them who are once in this eſtate. I am perſwaded, if this were believed, that *he who is a ſervant doth not abide in the houſe for ever*, (though he that is a Son doth) it would ſtir us up to more divine zeal in our purſuit after Faith.

V. Fifthly, This likewiſe pointeth out the excellency of the grace of Faith, it is that grace, by which other actions are pleaſant to God, and are taken off

off our hand; as is clear, *Heb.* 11. 4. *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent ſacrifice then Cain*, which muſt be underſtood even of all other duties. And that word, *verſe* 6. *Without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*, ſpeaketh this alſo, That by Faith we do exceedingly pleaſe him. And this is a moſt ſad and lamentable reproof unto many who are here, that their actions do not pleaſe God, becauſe they are not in faith. Would you know a deſcription of your prayers? (ye who are hypocrites, and deſtitute of the knowledge of God) It is this, your prayers are the breach of the third Command, *In taking the Name of the Lord in vain, for which he will not hold you guiltleſs.* And would ye know what is your hearing of Sermon? *It is an abomination to the Lord*, according to that word in *Tit.* 1. 15. *To the unbelieving and impure, nothing is clean.* And as *Solomon* doth ſpeak, *The plowing of the wicked is ſin*: So that all your actions that ye go about, are but an offence to the Majeſty of the Lord,

Now we would ſpeak to theſe two things before we proceed to the evidences of Faith: (to wit) Firſt, That there is a difference betwixt the direct act of Faith, and the reflecting act of Faith, For there may be a direct act of Faith in a Chriſtian, when he is not perſwaded that he doth believe; but the reflecting acts of Faith are theſe, which a Chriſtian hath, when he is perſwaded in his conſcience that he doth believe. And we would ſecondly ſay, that there are many that go down to their grave under that ſoul deſtroying deluſion that they are in Faith, and yet never did know what Faith is: I am perſwaded, there are many whom all the preachings in the World will never perſwade, that they did never believe, their Faith being born with them, and it will die with them, without any fruit. But Faith being ſuch an excellent grace, and ſo advantagious, (whereof we have ſpoken a few things) we ſhall ſpeak a little

ther of it. Firſt, in pointing out ſome evidences, by which a Chriſtian may know, whether or not he be indeed in the Faith. Secondly, I ſhall give you ſome helps whereby Faith may be keeped in exerciſe.

I. Now there is this firſt evidence of Faith, that a Chriſtian who doth believe, he accounteth abſence and want of fellowſhip with Chriſt, and communion with him, one of the greateſt and moſt lamentable croſſes that ever he had; as is clear, *Pſalm* 13. 3. *Lighten mine eyes*, ſaith *David*, that is, *Let me behold, and be ſatisfied with thy face*, and the motive that he backeth it with, is this, *leſt I ſleep the ſleep of Death*. *David* thought himſelf a dead man, if Chriſt did withdraw his preſence from him. Alſo it is clear, *Cant.* 3. 1. (compared with the following verſes) where abſence from Chriſt, and want of communion with him, was the greateſt croſs the Spouſe had: and it is clear from *Joh.* 20. 11, 12, 13. where *Mary* had a holy diſdain of all things in reſpect and compariſon of Chriſt. But I will tell you what a hypocrite doth moſt lament, and that is the want of reputation among the Saints: that is the great god, and idol among Hypocrites, and that which (when not enjoyed) Hypocrites and Atheiſts lament moſt, the world, and the luſt of their eyes when they want theſe, then they cry out, *They have taken away my gods, and what have I more?* They think Heaven can never make up the loſs of Earth. And certainly, if many of us would examine our ſelves by this, we would find our ſelves moſt defective. I would poſe all you who are here, who have taken on a name to be followers of Chriſt, whether or not ye have been content to walk thirty days in abſence from Chriſt, and yet never to lament it? Hath not Chriſt been thirty days and more in Heaven, without a viſit from ...? And yet for all this, ye have not cloathed your ... with ſackcloath. I will not ſay, that this is an undeniable

undeniable evidence of the total want of the grace of Faith, but it doth eminently prove this, that the perſon who hath come this length, hath loſed much of his primitive love, and much of that high eſteem which he ought to have of matchleſs Chriſt: what can you find in this world, that maketh you converſe ſo little with heaven? I think that it is the noble encouragement of a Chriſtian, when he is going down to his grave, that he hath this wherewith to comfort himſelf, *I am to change my place, but not my company*: death to the believing Chriſtian being a bleſſed tranſition and tranſportation to a more immediate, conſtant and uninterrupted enjoyment of God. But I believe, that if all who have the name of Believers in this generation, ſhould go to Heaven, they might have this to ſay, I am now not only to change my place, but alſo my company; For theſe ſeventy years I have been converſant with my Idols, but now I am to converſe with more bleſſed, divine, and excellent company. O that ye might be perſwaded to purſue much after an abſent Chriſt. Were it not a ſweet period of our life, to breath out our laſt breath in his arms, and to be living in the faith of being eternally with him, which might be founded upon his Word.

II. There is this ſecond evidence of one that is in the Faith: They do endeavour to advance that neceſſary work of the mortification of their idols, according to that word, 1 *Joh.* 3. 4. *Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himſelf even as he is pure*, *Act.* 15. 9. *Faith it purifieth the heart*. And concerning this evidence (leſt any ſhould miſtake it) I would ſay theſe things to you. Firſt, The mortification of a Chriſtian, as long as he is here below, it doth more conſiſt in reſolutions then attainments. It is certain that there are high attainments of a Chriſtian, in the mortification of his idols, but his reſolutions go ... above his performances. Secondly, we would ſay this, That

That those Christians who never came this length in Christianity, to make that an universal conclusion, and full resolution, *what have I to do any more with Idols?* They may suspect themselves, that they are not in the Faith: For a Christian that is in Christ, he is universal in resolutions, though he be not so in practice, but defective in performances. A Christian may have big resolutions with weak performances; for resolution will be at the gate of heaven, before practice come from the borders of Hell; there being a long distance betwixt resolution and practice; and the one much swifter then the other. And thirdly, We would likewise say, That ye who never did know what it was to endeavour (by prayer and the exercise of other duties) the mortification of your lusts and idols; ye may be afraid, that ye have not yet the hope of seeing him as he is. And I would say this to many, who are settled upon their lees, and who never did know what it was to spend one hour in secret prayer for mortifying an idol, that they would beware lest that curse be past in heaven against them; *I would have purged you, and ye would not be purged, therefore ye shall not be purged any more till you die*; that iniquity of refusing to commune with Christ in the work of secret mortification, I say, that *iniquity shall not be purged away.* And we would once seriously desire you, by that dreadful sentence that Christ shall pass against you, and by the love ye have to your immortal souls, and by the pains of these everlasting torments of hell, that ye would seriously set about the work of spiritual mortification; that so ye may evidence that ye have believed, and that ye have the soul comforting hope of eternal life. I would only speak this one word to you, (and desire you seriously to ponder it,) What if within twelve hours hereafter a summonds were given you (without continuation of days) to compear before the solemn

semn and dreadful Tribunal of that impartial Judge, Jesus Christ: What suppose ye, would be your thoughts? Will ye examine your own conscience, what ye think would be your thoughts, if such summonds were given unto you, I am perswaded of this, *That your knees would smite one against another, and your face should gather paleness*, seing your conscience would condemn you, *That ye had been weighed in the ballance and found light*: O think ye that ye can both fight and triumph in one day? Think ye that ye can fight and overcome in one day? Think ye your lusts and unmortified corruptions so weak and faint-hearted an enemy, that upon the first appearance of such imaginary champions (as most part of us are in our own eyes) that your idols would lay down arms and let you trample on them? Believe me, mortification is not a work of one day, or one year, but it is a work will serve you all your time, begin as soon as you will: And therefore seeing you have spent your days in the works of the flesh, it is time that now ye would begin and pursue after him, whose works is within him, and whose reward shall come before him.

III. Now there is this third evidence, by which a Christian may know whether he be in the Faith or not, and it is, that Christ is matchless and incomparable, unto such an one, according to that word, 1 Pet. 2. 7. *To you that believe Christ is precious*, and that word that *Luke* hath in his 7. Chapter, at the close, *That she to whom much was forgiven, loved much.* Now lest this likwise should prove a discouragement to any, I would onely have you taking notice of this, that a Christian may be a Believer, and yet want the sensible discoveries of this, that Christ is matchlesly precious to him: but this is certain, that they which are in the lively exercise of faith, it is impossible then for them not to esteem

Chriſt matchleſs. And I would ſpeak this likewiſe to many who are here; Have ye not been living theſe ten years in Faith? And I would poſe you with this, Eſteem ye not your idols more matchleſs then Chriſt, and more of worth then he? It is impoſſible that there can be any lively exerciſe of Faith, and not eſteem Chriſt matchleſs. It is not to ſay it with your mouth, and contradict it with your heart, will do the buſineſs: For if your hearts could ſpeak, it would ſay, I would ſell Chriſt *for thirty pieces of ſilver*: But my idols would I ſell at no rate. Are there not many of you who love the world and its pleaſures, better nor the eternity of joy? Oh, know ye not that word (O ye deſperately ignorant of the Truths of God,) *That he who loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him*: And yet notwithſtanding of the light of the word, ye would ſell your immortal ſouls (with *Eſau*) *For a meſs of pottage*: O but it is a poor bargain when ye have ſold the eternity of joy for a paſſing world, and for its tranſitory delights! I would earneſtly know what ſhall be your thoughts in that day, when ye ſhall be ſtanding upon the utmoſt line betwixt time and eternity. O what will be your thoughts at that day? but you are to follow on to an endleſs pain, (by appearance) and then you are to leave your idols. I ſhall only deſire, that ye may read the word, *Iſa.* 10.3. *What wil ye do in the day of viſitation, and in the deſolation which ſhall come from far? To whom will ye flee for help! and where will ye leave your glory?* Ye ſhall then preach mortification to the life, though all the time of mortification ſhall then be cut off. O but to hear a worldly minded man, when eternity of pain is looking him in the face, (preach out concerning the vanity of this world) might it not perſwade you that the world is a fancy and a dream that ſhall flee away, and ſhall leave you in the day of your greateſt ſtrait.

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IV. And there is this fourth evidence of Faith, That a Chriſtian, who doth truely believe, he is that Chriſtian who entertaineth a divine jealouſie and a holy ſuſpition of himſelf, whether or not he doth believe; I love not that Faith which is void of fear: this was clear in the practice of believing *Noah*, that though by Faith he built the Ark, yet he had fear mixed with his Faith. I know that there are ſome who are ignorant concerning this, what it is to doubt concerning eternal peace; and more, it is not every one that doubteth, that certainly ſhall get heaven; for I think an hypocrite may doubt concerning his eternal ſalvation; however, I think the exerciſe of a hypocrite under his doubtings, it is more the exerciſe of his judgement, then the exerciſe of his conſcience: And I may ſay, That if all the exerciſe of the Law, which is preached in theſe days, were narrowly ſearched, it would be more the exerciſe of light, then the exerciſe of conſcience, We ſpeak theſe things as our doubt, which never was our exerciſe, and we make theſe things our publick exerciſe which was never our private chamber-exerciſe. And I think that if all that a Chriſtian did ſpeak to God in Prayer, were his exerciſe, he would ſpeak leſs and wonder more. We would be ſpeechleſs when we go to God; for often if we did ſpeak nothing but our exerciſe, we would have nothing to ſay. And certainly it is true, that often we fall into that woeful ſin, *Of deſperate lying againſt the Holy Ghoſt*, by flattering God with our mouth, and lying unto him with our tongue. And I ſhall only ſay theſe two words; There are ſome who have this for their great deſign.
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ſtudy rather to be reconciled with their conſcience, then to be reconciled with God ; Their great aim they ſhoot at, is this, to get their conſcience quieted, though they know not what it is, to have the ſoul-comforting peace of God to quiet them.

V. Now, there is this laſt evidence of Faith, That juſtifying Faith is a Faith which putteth the Chriſtian to be much in the exerciſe of theſe duties, by which it may be maintained, for we muſt keep Faith as *the apple of our eye*: And for that end, I would only give you theſe three things, by which Faith muſt be keeped in exerciſe ; and a real Chriſtian will be endeavouring in ſome meaſure to attain unto theſe.

1. It keepeth Faith much in exerciſe, to be much in marking and taking notice of the divine exerciſe and proofs of the love of God, wherewith a Chriſtian doth meet, as is clear from that word, in *Rom.* 5. 4. *Experience worketh hope.* I durſt be bold to charge the moſt part that are indeed in Chriſt with this, that they are too little in remarking and taking notice of the experiences of his love. Ye ſhould mark the place of your experience, and much more ye ſhould mark the experience it ſelf : as is clear from Scripture, that the very place where Chriſtians did meet with experience, in ſuch an enjoyment of God, they marked it, *Ezek.* 1. 1. *By the rivers of Chebar the heavens were opened, and I ſaw the viſions of God :* And *Gen.* 32. 30. *Jacob called the place Peniel,* the place of living, after ſeeing of the face of God: it was ſo remarkable unto him. And we conceive, that ye would mark theſe two things mainly in your practice. Firſt, Ye would mark (if ye can poſſible) the firſt day of your cloſing with Chriſt, and of your coming out of *Egypt*: and we may allude unto that command (if not more then allude unto it) in *Deut.* 16. 1. *Obſerve the moneth of Abib, and keep the paſſe-over*

over unto the Lord thy God : For in the month of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee out of the land of Egypt. And ſecondly, We would have you much in marking theſe experiences which have increaſed your Faith, and which have ſtrengthned your love, and which have made you mortifie your idols; Theſe are experiences eſpecially to be marked.

2. Faith is keeped in exerciſe, and we win to the lively aſſurance of our intereſt in God : which we would preſs upon you, by being much in the exerciſe of ſecret prayer. O but many loveth much to pray when abroad, who never loved to pray when alone. And that is a deſperate ſign of hypocriſie, according to that, *Mat.* 6. 5. It is ſaid of hypocrites, *They love to pray, ſtanding in the Synagogues, and in the corners of the ſtreets, that they might be ſeen of men* : But it is never ſaid of theſe perſons, that they love to pray alone, onely they loved to pray in Synagogues, but it is ſecret, and retired prayer, by which Faith muſt be keeped in exerciſe.

3. And there is this likewiſe that we would preſs upon you, that ye would be much in ſtudying communion and fellowſhip with God, that ſo your Faith may be keeped in life. And O what a bleſſed life were it, each day to be taken up to the top of the mount *Piſga*, and there to behold that promiſed land, to get a refreſhful ſight of the Crown every morning, which might make us walk with joy all alongs that day! The heart of a CHRISTIAN ought to be in HEAVEN, His converſation ought to be there, his eyes ought to be there. And I know not what of a Chriſtian ought to be out of Heaven (even before his going there) ſave his lumpiſh tabernacle of clay, which cannot inherite incorruption, till he be made incorruptible. And I ſhall ſay no more but this, many of us are readier to betray him with a kiſs, and crucifie him afreſh, then to keep com-

communion with him : but *wo eternally be to him by whom the Son of man is betrayed, and that doth crucifie Christ afresh ; it were better for him that a milstone were hanged about his neck , and he were cast into the depth of the sea.* I remember an expression of a man, not two days ago, who (upon his death bed) being asked of one what he was doing ; did most stupidly, though most truely reply , *That he was fighting with Christ* ; and I think that the most part of us (if he prevent us not) shall die *fighting with Christ.* But know , and be perswaded , that he is too sore a party for us to *fight with*; *He will once tread you in the wine-press of his fury, and he shall return with dyed garments from treading such of you as would not imbrace him; He shall destroy you with all his heart. Therefore be instructed* lest his soul be disjointed from you (as that word in *Jer.* 6. 8. *And lest your soul be eternally separated from him* ; Be I say, Instructed to close with him by Faith , Now to him who can make you to do so, we desire to give praise.

In the two Sermons next following , you have the rest of these sweet Purposes, which the worthy Author Preached upon the same Text.

SERMON. V.

1 Joh. 3. 23. *This is his Commandment, that ye should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ,* &c.

THere are two great rocks upon which a Christian doth ordinarily dash in his way& motion toward his rest. 1. The rock of presumption and carnal confidence; so that when Christ dandleth them upon his knees , and satisfieth them with the breasts of his consolations , and maketh their cup to overflow, then they cry out , *My Mountain standeth strong, I shall*

shall never be moved ? And , 2. The rock of misbelief and discouragement ; So that, when he hideth his face , and turneth back the face of his Throne, then they cry out , *Our hope and our strength is perished from the Lord* ; we know not what it is to bear our enjoyments by humility , nor our crosses by patience and submission , O but misbelief and jealousie are bad interpreters of dark dispensations , they know not what it is to read these mysterious characters of divine Providence, except they be written in the legible characters of sense ; misbelief is big with child of twins , and is travelling till bring forth apostacy and security ; and no doubt , he is a blessed Christian that hath overcome that woful idol of misbelief , and doth walk by that Royal Law of the Word , and not by that changeable rule of dispensations. We conceive that there are three great idols and Dagons of a Christian , that hindereth him from putting a blank in Christs hand concerning his guiding to Heaven , there is pride , self indulgence and security. Do we not covet to be more excellent then our Neighbour ? Do we not love to travel to Heaven through a valley of Roses ? And do we not ambitiously desire to walke toward Sion , sleeping (rather then weeping) *as we go* ? Are there not some words that we would have taken out of the Bible ? That is sad Divinity to flesh and bloud, *Through many tribulations must we enter into the Kingdom of Heaven :* we love not to be *changed from vessel to vessel , that so our scent may be taken from us.*

There are three great enemies of Christ : Misbelief, Hypocrisie, and Prophanity ; Misbelief is a bloudy sin , Hypocrisie is a silent sin , Prophanity is a crying sin. Those are mother evils , and I shall give you these differences betwixt them : Misbelief crucifieth Christ under the vail of humility , Hypo-

crisie crucifieth Christ under the vail of love; and profanity putteth him to open shame. Misbelief denyeth the love and power of God, Hypocrisie denyeth the Omniscience of God, and Profanity denyeth the Justice of God. Misbelief is a sin that looketh after inherent righteousness, hypocrisie is a sin that looketh after external holiness only, and profanity is a sin that looketh after heaven without holiness: making connexion between these things that God hath always separate, and separating these things which he hath always put together: so that their Faith shall once prove a delusion, and fly away as a dream in the night. But let us study this excellent grace of true and saving Faith, which shall be a precious remedy against all those Christ-destroying and soul-destroying evils.

But now to come to that which we did purpose thirdly to be spoken of from the words, which was the sweetness of this grace of Faith; no doubt, it is a pleasant command, and it maketh all commands pleasant, it is that which casteth a divine lustre upon the most hard sayings of Christ, and maketh the Christian to cry forth, *God hath spoken in his holiness, I will rejoyce.* We need not stand long to clear that Faith is a sweet and refreshing command; for it is oftentimes recorded in Scripture to the advantage of this grace; and unspeakeable joy and heavenly delight are the hand-maids that wait upon it. But more particularly to make it out, we shall speak to these things. The first is, That this grace giveth a Christian a broad and comprehensive sight of Christ, maketh him to behold not only the beauty of his actings, but the beauty of his person: and there are these three precious sights that Faith giveth to a Christian of Christ: First, It letteth the Christian see Christ in his absolute and personal excellency, taking him up as the eternal Son of God, as the Ancient of Days, as the Father of Eterni-

ternity, as *the expres's Image of His Fathers Person, and the brightness of his glory*, and this filleth the soul with divine fear and admiration. Hence is that word, *Heb.* 11.27. *That we see by Faith him that is invisible.* As if he had said, Faith is that grace that maketh things that are invisible, visible unto us. Secondly, It letteth the soul see Christ in his relative excellencies, that is, what he is to us; Faith taketh up Christ as a Husband, and from thence we are provoked to much boldness and divine confidence, and withal, to see these rich possessions that are provided for us by our elder Brother, who was *born for adversity*; Faith taketh up Christ as a blessed *Days man that did lay his hand upon us both*: And from thence is constrained to wonder at the condescendency of Christ, it taketh him up as dying, and as redeeming us from the power of the grave, and from the hands of our enemies; & this provoketh Christians to make a total & absolute resignation of themselves over unto Christ, *To serve him all the days of our life in righteousness, & holiness.* And thirdly, Faith maketh the soul to behold these mysterious draughts of spotless love, those divine emanations of love that have flowed from his ancient and everlasting love since the world began. Would you know the great ground why we are so ignorant of him, who is the study of Angels, and of all that are about the Throne? It is this, we are not much in the exercise of Faith. And if we would ask that question, What is the way to attain to the saving knowledge of God in Christ? We could give no answer to it but this, Believe, and again believe, and again believe: Faith openeth these mysterious seals of his boundless perfection, and in some way teacheth the Christian to answer that unanswerable question, *What is his Name, and what is his Sons Name?*

There is this secondly that pointeth out the sweet-

nesſ of Faith, that it giveth an excellent reliſh unto the promiſes, and maketh them food to our ſoul. What are all the promiſes without Faith (as to our uſe) but as a dead letter that hath no life; but faith exerciſed upon the promiſes, maketh a Chriſtian cry out, *The words of his mouth are ſweeter unto me then the honey and the honey comb*; as is clear from *Heb.* 11.12,13. It is by Faith that we imbrace the promiſes, and do receive them.

Thirdly, The ſweetneſs of Faith may appear by this, that it enableth a Chriſtian to rejoyce under the moſt anxious and afflicting diſpenſations that he meeteth with while he is here below; as is clear from *Rom.* 5.1,5. where his being juſtified by Faith, hath this fruit attending it, to *joy in tribulation*; And likewiſe from, *Heb.* 10.34,35. Doth not Faith hold the Crown in its right hand, and letteth a Chriſtian behold theſe infinite dignities that are provided unto them after they have, *as a ſtrong man run their race*? And when a Chriſtian is put into a *furnace hot ſeven times more then ordinary*, it bringeth down the Son of Man Jeſus Chriſt, to *walk with them in the furnace*; So that they walk ſafely, and with joy through fire and water, (and in a manner) they can have no croſs in his company. For would ye know what is the deſcription of a croſs? It is to want Chriſt in any eſtate. And would ye know what is the deſcription of proſperity? It is to have Chriſt in any condition or eſtate of life; What can ye want that have him, and what can ye have that want him, He is that All; ſo that all things beſides him are but vanity. But beſides this, Faith doth diſcover unto a Chriſtian, that there is a ſweet period of all his tryals and afflictions that he can be expoſed unto; ſo that he can never ſay that of Faith, which *Ahab* ſpake of *Micajah*, *He never propheſieth good things to me*, But rather he may ſay always the contrary, Faith never propheſieth evil unto me, it being a grace that propheſieth excellent things in the darkeſt night, and ſweetly declareth, that though *weeping do endure for the evening, yet joy cometh in the morning*; And that, *though now they go forth weeping, bearing preciousſeed, yet at laſt they ſhall return rejoycing, having ſhaves in their boſome.*

And this may bring in the fourth conſideration to point out the ſweetneſs of Faith, That it giveth a Chriſtian a refreſhing ſight of that land that is afar off, and maketh him to behold that inheritance that is provided for the *Saints in light*; it goeth forth to the *brook Eſhcol*, and there doth pluck down thoſe grapes that grow in Emanuels Land, to bring up a good report upon that noble Countrey we are ſojourning towards, and the City, the Streets whereof are paved with tranſparent Gold. And howbeit it may be a perplexing debate between many and their own ſouls, whether or not theſe eyes that have been the windows through which ſo much uncleanneſs hath entred, and theſe ſpecies of luſt have been conveyed into the heart, ſhall once be like the *eyes of a dove waſhed with milk and fitly ſet*; and be admitted to ſee that glorious object, *The Lamb that ſitteth upon the Throne*: Or whether ever theſe tongues that have been *ſet on fire of hell*; and theſe polluted lips that have ſpoke ſo much againſt God, and Heaven, and all his people, and intereſts, ſhall ever be admitted to ſing theſe heavenly *Halelujahs* amongſt that ſpotleſs queer of Angels, and that *Aſſembly of the firſt born*; or if theſe hands or feet that have been ſo active to commit iniquity, and ſo ſwift to *run after vanity*, ſhal ever be admitted hereafter to carry theſe *Palm Branches*, and to follow the *Lamb whereever he goeth*; and whether ever theſe hearts that have been indeed *a Bethaven, a houſe of idols*, may yet notwithſtanding, be a dwelling for the Holy Ghoſt,

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Though these things (we say) and such like may be the subject of many sad debates to some weary souls, and cause many *tossings to and fro till the morning:* yet faith can bring all these mysteries to light, and looking *within the vail*, can let us see thousands of thousands who were once as ugly as our selves, yet now having *washed their robes, and made them white in the bloud of the Lamb*, are admitted to *stand before the Throne of God and serve him day and night.*

Now there is that fourthly; which we promised to speak of concerning this grace of Faith from these words, and it is the absolute necessity that is of the exercise of this grace, which is holden forth in that word, *his Commandment*; which doth import these three things; 1. That all the Commands that we can obey without this Commandment of Faith, it is but a polluting of our selves in the ditch till our own cloathes abhor us. 2. That God taketh greater delight in the exercise of that grace of Faith, then in the exercise of any other. And lastly, that as to the many imperfections which we have in our obedience, there is a sweet act of oblivion past of them all; if we make conscience seriously to obey this command of Faith, which is indeed, the sweet compend of the Gospel, all these things do most clearly appear, in that believing here is called, *His Commandment*, by way of excellency, as if this were his only Commandment.

But that we may yet a little more particularly point out the absolute necessity of Faith; there are these things that speaketh it forth to the full. 1. That though rivers of tears should run down our eyes, because we keep not his Law, though we should never rise off our knees from prayer, and should all our life time speak to God with the tongue of Angels; and though we should constantly obey his Commands, yet without Faith we should never escape that eternal sentence of excommunication from the presence of the

the Lord; there being no action that doth proceed from us which can please the Majesty of the Lord, unless it hath its rise from this principle of Faith; as is clear from *Heb.* 11.6. *Without Faith it is impossible to please God.* And though we should offer unto him ten thousand rivers of oyl, and thousands of rams, and should offer up in a burnt Sacrifice all the beasts that are *upon the mountains, and the trees that are upon many hills*, this should be the answer that God should return unto us, *Who hath required these things at your hands? I take no pleasure in these solemn sacrifices*; Because there is no way of attaining peace with God, but through the exercise of Faith, making use of the spotless righteousness of Christ. 2. Let us do our utmost, by all the inventions we can, to bring down our body, and let us separate our selves from all the pleasure of the flesh; yet all our idols shall reign without much contradiction, except once we do attain unto this grace of Faith, which is that victory, *whereby we must overcome the world*, and the hand that maketh use of infinite strength for subduing of corruption, making the Christian sweetly to take up that song, *Stronger is he that is with us, than he that is in the world.*

From all this that we have said, both of the sweetness of Faith, and the necessity thereof, we would propose these few considerations, or two or three sorts of persons. 1. There are some who live in that vain imaginary delusion of attaining Heaven through a Covenant of Works, and do neglect to seek salvation by Faith, in the righteousness of Christ. And to these who build upon this sandy foundation, I shall say but these two words. First, How long shall ye labour *in the fire of any vanity?* Do ye ever think to put on the capestone? know ye not that the day is approaching, when your house shall fall about your ears, your confidence shall be rejected, and *your*

hope

hope ſhall evaniſh as a dream , and flie away as a viſion of the night? Secondly, What a monſtrous blindneſs, and what an unſpeakable act of folly muſt it be, to ſay, that Chriſt was crucified in vain? which yet ye do practically aſſert, when ye go about to purchaſe a righteouſneſs through the works of the Law.

2. There are ſome who are ſecure in their own thoughts concerning their faith: they never queſtioned the reality of it, they never examined it. O ye whoſe Faith is as old as your ſelves, ye ſay ye never knew what it was to diſpute, and I may ſay, ye never knew what it was to believe. Thou prophane hypocrite, let me tell thee, a ſtrong faith, and yet ſtrong idols, muſt needs be a ſtrong deluſion; Thou wilt not obey the Lord, thou wilt not pray, thou wilt not believe a threatning in all the Word; thou wilt count all Religion madneſs and fooliſhneſs, and yet thou wilt perſwade thy ſelf thou believeſt in Chriſt. *O be not deceived, God is not mocked*: and why will ye mock your ſelves? Shall I tell you that Reprobates have a ſad Religion, one day they muſt believe, and obey, and pray, and give a teſtimony to Godlineſs, but alace, too late, and little to their advantage. Shall not he whom all the Miniſters on earth could ſcarce ever perſwade to believe ſo much, as a heaven or hell, or one threatning in all the Book of God, at laſt be forced to believe their own ſenſe, when they ſhall ſee the Ancient of Days upon the Throne, and ſhall hear the cryes of ſo many thouſand living witneſſes come out both from heaven and hell, bearing teſtimony to the truth of threatnings and promiſes, that not one jot of them is fallen to the ground, and he who would never be perſwaded to bow a knee to God in earneſt all his life, ſhall he not then pray with greateſt fervency, *that hills and mountains might fall upon him, to cover him from the face of the Lamb*: And he that would never ſubmit to a command of God, muſt he not at laſt

laſt obey that dreadful Command, *Depart from me ye curſed into everlaſting torment*, &c. Yea, he who was the greateſt mocker in the world, ſhall then confeſs, that they are bleſt who put their truſt in the Lord, as they are excellently brought in, though in an Apocriphal Book, *Wiſd. c.* 5. 4. Crying out with great terrour, while they behold that unexpected ſight of the glorious condition of the Godly. O here is the men, ſay they, whom we mocked, whoſe life we accounted madneſs, and their end diſhonourable: Be wiſe therefore in time, and do that willingly, which ye muſt do by conſtraint, and do that with ſweetneſs and advantage, that ye muſt do at length with loſs and ſorrow.

Thirdly, there are ſome who certainly have ſome hope of eternal life, but contenteth themſelves with a ſmal meaſure of aſſurance, and theſe I would beſeech, that ye would be more endeavouring to make your calling and election ſure, and would be endeavouring to ſee your names written in the ancient Records of Heaven: And this we ſhall preſs upon you by ſeveral Arguments. 1. Thoſe ſtrong and ſubtile, and ſoul deſtroying deluſions that are amongſt many, who conceive they do believe (as we were ſaying) and *are pure in their own eyes, who yet are not purged from their iniquities.* O! are there not many of us that are in a golden dream, that ſuppoſe *we are eating, but when we awake our ſoul is empty*, whoſe faith is a metaphyſick notion, that hath no foundation, but mens apprehenſion; and this ſhall never bear us through the gates of death, nor convey us in into eternity of joy. 2. May not this preſs you to follow after aſſurance, that is a compendious way to ſweeten al your croſſes: as is clear from Hab. 3. 17, 18. where the convictions of this made *Habbakuk* to rejoyce *in the God of his ſalvation: Though the fig tree did not bear fruit, and the labour of*

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the olive did fail, and there were no sweetness to be found in the vine, and from *Heb.* 10. 34. where they took joyfully the *spoiling of their goods*, *knowing within themselves*, *that they had a better and an enduring substance:* This is indeed that tree which if we cast into the waters of *Marah*, they will presently become sweet, for it is not below the child of hope to be much anxious about these things that he meets with here, when he sincerely knoweth that Commandment shall come forth, *Lift up your head, for the day of your eternal redemption draweth near*, even the day when all the rivers of his sorrow shall sweetly run into the ocean of everlasting delights. 3. A Christian that is much in assurance, he is much in communion and fellowship with God, as is clear from the *Song* 1.13,14. and *Song* 2. 3. where when once she cometh to that, to be perswaded that Christ was her beloved, then she sat down under his shadow, and his fruit was pleasant unto her taste; for the assured Christian doth taste of these crums that fall from that higher Table, and no doubt, these that have tasted of that old wine will not straight way desire the new, because the old is better. And then 4. It is the way to keep you from Apostacy, and making defection from God: Faith is that grace which will make you continue with Christ in all his tentations, as is clear from, 2*Pet.* 1.10. where this is set down as a fruit of making our calling and election sure, that if we do these things we shall never fail; Faith makes a Christian to live a dependent life; for would you know the *motto* of a Christian? It is this, *self-diffidence*, and *Christ-dependence*, as is clear from that word, in the *Song* 8. 5. that while we are walking through this wilderness, *we are leaning upon our well beloved.* 5. This assurance will help a Christian to overcome many tentations. There are four sorts of tentations that assault the Christian; there are temptations of desire, temptations of love, temptations

tations of love, temptations of hope, and temptations of anxiety, all which, a Christian through this noble grace of assurance, may sweetly overcome; he that hath once made Christ his own, what can he desire but him? As Psa. 27. 4. *One thing have I desired of the Lord:* What can he love more then Christ, or love beside Christ, all his love being drowned, (as it were) in that Ocean of his excellencies, and a sweet complacency found in the enjoyment of him? And as to hope; will not assurance make a Christian cry forth, *Now Lord what wait I for? my hope is in thee.* And when the heart is anxious, doth not assurance make a Christian content to *bear the indignation of the Lord*, and patiently submit unto the cross, since there is a sweet connexion betwixt his cross and his crown, *Rom.* 8. 35,36. *If he suffer with him, he shall also reign with him.* And lastly, there is this argument to press you to assurance, that it sweetneth the thoghts of death; it maketh death unto a Christian, not the king of terrors, but the king of desires: and it is upon these grounds that assurance maketh death refreshful unto a Christian. 1. He knoweth that it is the funeral of all his miseries, and the birth-day of all his blessed and eternal enjoyments. That it is the Coronation day of a Christian, and the day when he shall have that Marriage betwixt Christ and him sweetly solemnized; And that when he is to step that last step, he knoweth that death will make him change his place, but not his company; And O that we could once win unto this, to seal that conclusion without presumption, *My beloved is mine, and I am his.* We might without presumption, sing one of the songs of Sion, even while we are in this strange land, and taking Christ in our armes, might sweetly cry forth, *Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.* Comfort your selves in this, that all your clouds shall once pass away, and that

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that truth shal once come to pass which was confirmed by the oath of an Angel, with his hand lifted up towards Heaven, *That time shal be no more.* Time shal once sweetly die out in Eternity, & ye may be *looking after new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.* O long to be with him, for Christ longeth to have you with him.

SERMON VI.

1 Joh. 3. 23. *This is his Commandment, that ye should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, &c.*

THere are three most precious and cardinal graces which a Christian ought mainly to pursue: There is that exalting grace of Faith, that comforting grace of Hope, and that aspiring grace of Love: And if once a Christian did take up that heavenly difference that is betwixt these sister-graces, he might be provoked to move after them most swiftly, as the chariots of *Aminadab*: And there is this difference between these graces; Faith is a sober and silent grace: Hope is a patient and submissive grace: Love is an ambitious and impatient grace. Faith cryeth out *O, my soul! be silent unto God.* Hope cryeth out, I will wait patiently for the Lord, *untill the vision shall speak.* But Love, it cryeth out, *How long art thou a coming?* And it is waiting to hear the sound of his feet coming over *the mountains of separation.* That is the Motto of Hope, *Quod defertur, non aufertur*; that which is delayed, saith Hope, is not altogether taken away, and made voide: And that may be the divine embleme of the grace of Love; It is sight, infolding Desire in its arms, and it is desire clothed with wings, treading upon Delay and impediments. There is this second difference between these graces; the

the grace of Faith, it imbraceth the truth of the promises: the grace of Hope, it imbraceth the goodness of the thing that is promised; but that exalting grace of Love, it imbraceth the *Promises*: Faith cryeth out, *Hath he spoken it? He will also do it*: Hope cryeth out, *Good is the Word of the Lord, be it unto thy Servant according to thy promise*: And Love, it cryeth with an higher Note, *As is the apple tree amongst the trees of the wood, so is my well beloved amongst the sons.* Thirdly, There is that difference between these graces, Faith, it overcometh temptations: Hope, it overcometh difficulties, and Love stayeth at home and divideth the spoil: There is a sweet correspondence between those graces in this; Faith, it fighteth and conquereth; and Hope it fighteth and conquereth; but Love, it doth enjoy the Trophies of the victory. And, Fourthly, there is this difference, the noble grace of Faith, it shal once evanish into sight; That noble grace of Hope, it shall once vanish into possession and enjoyment; But that constant grace of Love, it shall be the eternal companion of a Christian, and shall walk in with him unto the streets of the *New Jerusalem.* And I would ask you that question, What a day shall it be when Faith shall cede to sight? What a day shall it be when Hope shall yield its place to Love, and Love and Sight shall eternally sit down, and solace themselves in these blessed Mysteries, these everlasting consolations of Heaven, world without end. And fifthly; There is this difference, less will satisfie the grace of Faith, and the grace of Hope, then will satisfie the grace of Love; Faith it will be content with the Promise, and Hope will be content with the thing that is promised; but that ambitious grace of Love, it will be only content with the Promiser; Love claspeth its arms about that precious and noble object Jesus Christ. Love is a suspicious grace. It oftentimes cryeth forth,

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They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him; So that Faith is oftentimes put to resolve suspicions of love. I can compare these three graces to nothing so fitly, as to those three great Worthies that *David* had, These three graces, they will break thorow all difficulties, were it an host of Philistines, that so they may pleasure Christ, and may drink of the Well of *Bethlehem*, that Well of everlasting consolation that floweth from beneath the Throne of God: Love is like *Noah*'s dove, It never findeth rest for the sole of its foot, until once it be within that Ark, that place of repose Jesus Christ.

And sixthly, There is this last difference between them, Faith taketh hold upon the faithfulness of Christ; Hope taketh hold upon the goodness of Christ; but love, it taketh hold upon the heart of Christ. And think ye not it must be a pleasant and soul refreshing exercise, to be continually taken up in imbracing him, that is that eternal admiration of Angels. Must it not be an excellent life, and dayly to be feeding on the *finest of the wheat*, *and to be satisfied with hony out of the rock*. O but heaven must be a pleasant place! And if once we would but taste of the first ripe grapes, and a cluster of wine that groweth in that pleasant land, might not we be constrained to bring up a good report of it.

But now to come to that which I purpose mainly to speak in at this time. The last thing concerning Faith, that we proposed from the words, was the object upon which Faith exerciseth it self, which is here set down to be *the Name of his Son Jesus Christ*. And that we may speak to this more clearly, we shall first speak a little to the negative, what things are not the fit object of Faith, and then to the positive, shewing how this Name of God, and of His Son Christ, is that ground, upon which a Christian may pitch his [faith]: For the first, ye must know that a Christian is

is not to build his Faith upon sense, nor sensible enjoyments. Sense may be an evidence of Faith, but it must not be the foundation of Faith; I know there are some that oftentimes cry out, *Except I put my fingers into the Print of the nails, and thrust my hand into the hole of his side, I will not believe*; and indeed it is a mystery unto the most part of us, to be exercising Faith upon a naked word of Promise, abstracted from sense; to love an absent Christ, and to believe on an absent Christ, are the two great mysteries of Christianity. But that sense is no good foundation for Faith, may appear, 1. That Faith which is builded upon sense is a most unconstant, a most fluctuating and transient Faith. I know sense hath its fits of love, and as it were, hath its fits of Faith; Sometimes sense is sick of love, and sometimes sense is strong in Faith, but ere six houres go about, sense may be sick of jealousie, and sick of misbelief, as you will see from *Psal.* 30. 6, 7. sense, that bold thing, it will instantly cry out, *My mountain standeth strong, I will never be moved*; but behold how soon it changeth its note, *Thou hides thy face, and I was troubled.* At one time it will cry forth, *who is like unto him that pardoneth iniquity*, and that *passeth over transgressions*; but ere many houres go about, I will sing a song upon another key, and cry out, *Why art thou become unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail?* 2. That Faith which is built upon sense, it wanteth the promise of blessedness, for this is annexed to believing, that is founded upon the Word, according to that in *John* 20. 29. *Blessed are those that have not seen, and yet have believed.* Nor hath that Faith that is built upon sense, such a solide joy waiting on it, as Faith that is built upon the naked word of promise, as may be cleared from that word, 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. where Faith exercising it self upon Christ not seen, maketh a Christian *to rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of glory*, a joy that doth

not

not attend believing, founded upon sense. 3. That Faith that is built upon sense, it giveth not much glory to God, for Faith that is built upon sense, it exalteth not the Faithfulness of God, it exalteth not the Omnipotency of God. I will tell you what is the Divinity of sense; let me see, and then I will believe; but it knoweth not what it is to believe upon trust, and because *the Lord hath spoken in his holiness*; and in effect, Faith that is built upon sense, is no Faith, even as, Rom. 8. *Hope that is seen, is no hope*; And therefore, when the Lord seeth a Christian making sense an idol, that he will not believe but when he seeth and feeleth, this doth often provoke the Majesty of the Lord to withdraw himself from that Christian, and to deny him the sweet influences of Heaven, and those consolations that are above, so that in an instant he hath both his Sense, and his Faith to seek.

2. A Christian is not to make his graces the Object of his Faith; that is, when a Christian doth behold Love burning within him, when he doth behold influences to prayer increasing, and mortification waxing strong, he is not to build his Faith upon them: this was condemned in the Church, in *Ezek.* 16. 14. compared with the 15. verse, I *made thee perfect with my comliness*; but the use that thou didst make of it, thou *didst put thy trust in thy beauty*, and then thou didst *play the harlot*. It is certain, that grace when it is the Object of our Faith, it doth provoke God to blast the lively exercise thereof, and to make a Christian oftentimes have that complaint; *Wo to me, my leanness, my leanness testifieth to my face*. I will tell you three great mysteries in Christianity about grace; The first is, to ride marches between these two, not to deny what they have, and yet to be denyed to what they have; many times, there is grace-denying, and not self denying; but this is that we would press upon

upon you, to be denyed to grace, according to that word which is recorded of *Moses*, *his face did shine, and he knew it not*: he did misken it (as it were) and was not at all puffed up with it; for so the words we conceive may run. Secondly, It is a great difficulty for a Christian to be denyed to his self-denial, to be humble in his being humble: for if pride can have no other foundation, it will build it self upon humility; and a Christian will grow proud in this, that he is growing humble. Thirdly, It is a difficulty for a Christian to examine his growing in grace, and not be puffed up; It is certain, a Christian ought to examine his growth in grace humbly, according to that, *Psal.* 63. 8. *My soul followeth hard after thee, thy right hand upholdeth me*. He doth not only take notice of this, that his soul did *follow after God*, but of the measure of that pursuit, my soul *followeth hard after thee*, and yet sweetly acknowledgeth, it was not his own feet which carried him, nor his own hand that kept him from falling.

3. Ye are not to build your Faith upon your works, and upon the righteousness of the Law: I need not stand long to refute that practical Popery that is amongst us, that thinketh we can go to Heaven through a Covenant of works. I told you not long since, what your going to Heaven through a Covenant of Works speaketh, even this horrid blasphemy; That it was an act of monstruous folly to send Christ to die for sinners; for, if you can go to Heaven without him, was not then Christ crucified in vain. And I would tell you now, that this speaketh out your damnable ignorance of the weakness and deceitfulness of your own hearts. O ye that are so great defenders of Salvation, by the Covenant of Works, I beseech you, What is the reason that ye break the Covenant of Works oftner then any; for there is none that thinketh they will go to Heaven

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this way, but those that are the greatest breakers of the Covenant of Works. And is not that inconsistent, and contradictory divinity, your faith contradicting your practice, and your practice telling you that your Faith is a lie.

Fourthly, We must not mix our own righteousness with Christs, as the object of our believing: This is indeed an evil that often lodgeth in the bosome of the most refined hypocrite, when Satan cannot prevail to exclude Christ altogether, then he is content with that whorish woman, to *divide the child*, and let the object of our Faith be half Christ, and half of *self*; And the truth is, many of these poor unwise sons, who stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children, do willingly hearken to this overture, for fear it be presumption for such poor wretches to meddle too boldly with the righteousness of Christ, but it were good such weak ones would consider that word, *Rom.* 10. 2. where the Holy Ghost calleth the making use of his righteousness, an act of submission, *They have not submitted (* saith he *) unto the righteousness of Christ.* O will ye not lay this to heart, that our Lord will take your believing, or your putting on his righteousness for an act of great humility, and will take your misbelief as a marvelous act of the highest pride and presumption.

Fifthly, We are not to make providence the object of our Faith. I know there are some that ask the ground of their right to Heaven, they will tell us, that God hath been kind to them all their days; I would only say to such, *He may be feeding you unto the day of slaughter, and no man knoweth love or hatred by any thing that is before him.* This much of the object of Faith negatively.

And now to speak to it positively, we see the Text holdeth out Christ himself as that excellent and

and compleat object of Faith, *This is his Commandment, that we believe on the Name of his Son*: and thus Faith closeth with Christ in a fourfold consideration, First, it closeth with God in Christ, not with God immediately and nakedly; for he dwelleth *in light inaccessible, that no man can approach unto; He is higher than the Heaven, what can we do? and deeper then hell, what can we know?* Job 11. Therefore we must approach unto him through a vail, even the vail of Christ His flesh, *Heb.* 10. God is a *consuming fire, and of purer eyes then that he can behold iniquity*: and therefore we must first cast our eyes upon that blessed *Days man, that laid his hand upon us both*; and look upon God as in *Christ, reconciling the world to himself*, and so draw near unto him through a Mediator, who is the first and the last, and he that liveth and was dead, and is alive for evermore, able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him, seeing he liveth for ever to make intercession for them. Secondly, Faith closeth with Christ, as rendered freely in a Covenant of promise. We would have had nothing to do with Christ, if he had not been given of the Father, and offered himself in a free Covenant of promise; but he being thus holden forth upon terms of free love (which doth utterly abominat hire) and so noble a proclamation issued forth under the great seal of Heaven, *That whosoever will, may come and drink of the water of life freely.* Upon this the poor creature draweth near by vertue of a right, and stretching out the arms of most enlarged affections, doth run upon him with that joyful shout, *my Lord, my God*: and then maketh an absolute resignation of it self to him; which is holden out in the Scripture by that sweet expression of *kissing of the Son.* And there are three parts of Christs blessed Body, that the Christian must endeavour to kiss and imbrace: the

mouth of Christ, the hand of Christ. and the feet of Christ: the kissing of his feet importing the exercise of love, the kissing of his hands the exercise of subjection, and the kissing of his mouth the exercise of communion and fellowship with him. Thirdly, Faith closeth with Christ as the purchaser and meritorious cause of all the good we receive: He is the person that hath purchased all these things unto us,& there is not one blink of love, there is not the smallest enjoyment that a Christian meeteth with, but it is the price of the blood of Christ; Christs precious blood was laid down for it. Fourthly, Faith closeth with Christ as the efficient and worker of all our mercies; all our enjoyments are from him as the efficient cause,that is,He is the worker of all these things in us, it is his precious fingers that must accomplish that blessed work of grace, and they are from Christ as the dispenser of these things; Christ is the great Steward of Heaven that doth communicate unto Believers all the Treasures of the Higher House; *For him hath God the Father sealed.* O! but that word that Christ once spake, is much verified by Himself. *It is more blessed to give, then to receive.* Christ is that fountain and treasure in whom all our gifts and graces are treasured up; for before the blessing come to Believers they come to Christ as the Head, according to that word, 2 *Tim.* 1. 9. *which grace was given to us in him, before the foundations of the world were laid.* It was given to Christ before the World was made, and for that end, that it might be communicated unto all his Members, and so out of His fulness we all receive, and grace for grace.

But, secondly, The Text holdeth forth more particularly this excellent object of Faith, to be the Name of his Son, *That ye believe in the Name of his Son.* And here indeed we may be at a stand. It is

is long since *Agur* did *non plus* all the world with that question, *What is his Name, and what is his Sons Name, if thou canst tell?* O how little a thing can be known of Him! And O how brutish is this generation! that know not so much loss,then mightbe known of Him in such a day of the Gospel. But that we may speak a little,according to our weak measure of Faith, as closing with the *Name* of Christ, His Name is his glorious Attributes, by which he revealeth so much of Himself in the Scriptures as poor mortals can take up. We did shew you before, that there was three of these that were the main pillars of justifying Faith, *Faithfulnesse, Omnipotency,* and *his infinite Love and Mercy.* And how from these may be answered all the objections of sense, of carnal reason and of misbelief, arising from convictions of unworthiness. And certain it is, that Faith in all its conflicts, maketh much use of the Names of Christ. And there is not an objection that a poor tempted soul can make,but Faith can frame an answer to it, out of some of these excellent Names of God, or of his Son Christ. It would be a more longsome work, than I intend, to let you see this in all; But I shall only instance that in *One glorious Name of God,* by which he proclaimeth his glory, *Exod.* 34. *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and that will by no mean clear the guilty, &c.* I think there are seven ordinary objections which may be answered from that place. First, is it an ordinary objection which misbelievers do make, that they are under the strength of their corruption: that they are black as the *Tents of Kedar,* and not beautiful as the *Curtains of Solomon:* And doth not the first letter of that Name answer this, that he is a *merciful Lord:* the one

importing his ability to ſave, and to bring down every high imagination? The other importing, his infinite delight to help thoſe who have no ſtrength, and are under the power of their adverſaries, the power of God being of no larger extent then his Love. There is that ſecond objection of miſbelief, that we have nothing to commend us to Chriſt; But all that we have to boaſt of, are infirmities and imperfections; and this is abundantly anſwered from that ſecond letter of his Name, that he is gracious, which importeth the freedom of the diſpenſations of his Love, that he walketh not with us according to that rule of merit, but according to that golden and excellent rule of Love. It is a great diſpute whether Mercy or Grace be the greateſt wonder, whether the Love of Chriſt, or the freedom of it, be the greateſt myſtery; ſure both theſe put together make up a matchleſs wonder? Thirdly, Miſbelief will object that we have forſaken him days without number, and that we cannot trace back our apoſtacy unto the firſt day of its riſe; and is not that abundantly anſwered from that letter of his Name, that he is long ſuffering? *This being that glorious attribute in God, the glory of which he deſireth to magnify above all his Name.* Fourthly, Miſbelief doth ordinarily propoſe this objection, that we have multiplied our tranſgreſſions, and have *committed whoredoms under every green Tree*; and have *given gifts to our lovers* even hiring our idols, ſo that we may take up that lamentation, *Is not our ſin great, and our tranſgreſſion infinite?* And is not this alſo anſwered from that letter of his Name, that he is *abundant in goodneſs?* That though ſin abound in us, yet grace doth much more ſuperabound in him. We confeſs indeed, that there are ſome that may walk under that condition, that if they had no other exerciſe through infirmity, but to make confeſſion, they might con-

confeſs, and never make any needleſs repetition; And truely in ſome reſpect, it is a mercy that we are Myſteries unto our ſelves; for if we did know compleatly the *ſeven* abominations of our hearts, and theſe myſterious actings of the body of death, we would be in hazard to chooſe *ſtrangling and death, rather then life*; Yet may not one glimpſe of that abundant goodneſs ſatisfie us, and calm the ſtorm? Fifthly, ſaith misbelief, we know that we have broken our vowes and covenants with God, and that all theſe things that we have taken on, have been but as flax before the fire of temptation, ſo that we have no hope that he will have mercy upon thoſe that have broken wed-lock, and have not been ſtedfaſt in his covenant. But is not that abundantly anſwered from that letter of his Name, *That he is abundant in truth*; which ſpeaketh that, That though we deny our ſelves, yet he abideth faithful, and doth not alter the words that hath gone out of his mouth. It is the infinite bleſſedneſs of man, that though he be changeable, yet they have to do with one that is an unchangeable beeing. Sixthly, There is that objection, That notwithſtanding all theſe things are matters of encouragement to ſome, yet they know not whether or not the lot of everlaſting Love hath fallen upon them; And whether their names be in the ancient records of Heaven. But this is anſwered from that letter of his Name, *He keepeth mercy for thouſands*, which ſheweth us that great number of thoſe upon whom the lot of everlaſting Love ſhall fall; And if there were no other ſentence in all the Scripture, this might be a ſufficient matter of a ſong, and might make us cry out, *who is like unto him, whoſe compaſſions have no end?* And who deſires to *magnifie his mercy above all his works*; and laſtly, misbelief maketh this objection, they have ſinned not only againſt the

not only againſt vows, not only after much enjoyment of God, but even after the application of the threatning; So that they conceive, *that their Maker will not have mercy upon ſuch.* Yet this is fully anſwered likewiſe from that letter of his Name: *He forgiveth iniquity, tranſgreſſion and ſin*; which three words do abundantly ſpeak forth, that there is no tranſgreſſion which he will not pardon; there being but one particular amongſt all that innumerable number of ſins which lodgeth in the heart of fallen men, that he declared unpardonable: and there is none of our diſeaſes that is above the infinite Art of Love; and concerning which we can take up that complaint, *There is no Balm in Gilead, and there is no Phyſician there.* And though providence may muſter up many impoſſibilities, yet let faith take the promiſe in the one hand, and impoſſibilities in the other, and deſire God to reconcile them; that if we cannot ſee any connexion between providence and the word, yet may we reflect upon the Omnipotency of God, that can make things that are ſeeming contrary, ſweetly agree together; the Commentary will never deſtroy the Text, nor providence will never deſtroy the faithfulneſs of God. And let me give you this advice, that thoſe objections of misbelief which you cannot anſwer, and in a manner putteth you to a *non plus*, and when ye have looked over all the *Names of God*, ye cannot find an anſwer to them, ſlight them and cover them as we have often told you, was the practice of believing *Abraham*, *Rom.* 4. 19. where that ſtrong objection of misbelief appearing before his eyes, the *deadneſs of his body*, and *the barrenneſs of Sarahs womb* it is recorded of him, *he conſidered not theſe things*, as there, he had a divine tranſition from the objection of misbelief to the acting of Faith: And this is from *Mat.* 15.25,26. where that ſtrong objection

on of misbelief being propoſed againſt that woman, that ſhe was not within the compaſs of Chriſts commiſſion, ſhe hath a noble way of anſwering with this *Lord have mercy upon me.* And (if ſo we may ſpeak) Faith hath a kind of divine impertinency in anſwering the objections of misbelief, or rather a holy ſlighting of them that gaineth the victory, when cavelling with temptations will not do it: The like alſo may be inſtanced in his Sons name: O how glorious titles are given to that *Prince of the Kings of the earth*, and to that *Plant of renown*, upon which the weakeſt faith may caſt anchor, and ride out the greateſt ſtorm. I ſhall not detain you long on this ſubject; but this we would have you know, that there is no ſtraint or difficulty that a Chriſtian can be expoſed unto; but there is ſome name or attribute of Chriſt that may ſweetly anſwer that difficulty, and make up that diſadvantage. Is a Chriſtian expoſed unto afflictions and troubles in a preſent world, let him comfort himſelf in this, that Chriſt is the ſhadow of *a great Rock in a wearied land.* Is a Chriſtian under inward anxiety and vexation of mind, let him comfort himſelf in this, *that Chriſt is the God of peace & of all conſolation.* Is a Chriſtian under darkneſs and confuſion of ſpirit, let him comfort himſelf in this, that Chriſt is the *father of light*, and is the *eternal wiſdom of God.* Is a Chriſtian under the convictions of this, that he is under the power and dominion of his luſts, let him comfort himſelf in this, that Chriſt is redemption; yea (that I ſtay no longer) if it were poſſible that a Chriſtian could have a neceſſity that he could not find a name in Chriſt to anſwer it, he may lawfully frame a name to Chriſt out of any promiſe in all the book of God, & he ſhould find it forth-coming for the relieving and making up of that neceſſity, God would not diſappoint his expectation.

There is yet one thing further, in reference to

object of Faith, which we ſhall deſire you to take notice of; and it is the way of Faiths cloſing with its noble object, and its reſting on him: And this we conceive may be excellently taken up by our conſidering of the many ſeveral names that Faith getteth in Scripture, beyond any other of the graces of the Spirit. It is called looking, *Iſai.* 45. 22. *Look unto me*: It is called *abiding in Chriſt*, Joh. 15. 4. *Abide in me*: It is called a keeping ſilence unto God, *Pſa.* 37. 7. *My ſoul truſt in God*; Or as the word is in the Original, *My ſoul be ſilent unto God*; and that in *Pſa.* 62. 1. *My ſoul waiteth*; Or as the word is, *Truly my ſoul is ſilent unto God.* Likewiſe, Faith is called a leaning, *Pſa.* 7. 15. *I have leaned upon thee from my mothers womb.* Faith it is called an *eating of Chriſts fleſh*, Joh. 6. 53. Faith is called a *caſting of our burthen upon God*, *Pſa.* 55. 22. *Caſt your burden upon God*: And Faith, it is called, *a coming unto God*, Mat. 11. 28. And according to theſe different names, there are ſeven noble properties, and matchleſs differences of this Grace of Faith; The firſt is, That this is this grace by which a Chriſtian doth enjoy much communion with God: Hence it is called a *looking*, which importeth, that Faith is a continual contemplation of the immortal ſoul, upon that precious and excellent object Jeſus Chriſt. There is that ſecond property of Faith. That it is that grace by which a communion with God is maintained: Hence it is called an *abiding in God.* It is that grace which maketh Chriſt and the believer to dwell together. The third property of Faith is, that it is a moſt ſubmiſſive grace; Hence it is called a *keeping ſilence unto God*; Faith as it were, it knoweth not what it is to repine; it is the noble excellency of Faith, it never knew what it was to miſconſtruct Chriſt, it is the noble excellency of Faith, it never knew what it was to paſs evil report upon Chriſt. Faith, it will promiſe good things

things to a Chriſtian in the darkeſt night; for, when Love asketh Faith that queſtion, *Iſai.* 21. 11, 12. *watchmen, what of the night? watchmen, what of the night?* Or, when ſhall the morning break? Faith anſwereth it with the words that follow (only a little inverting the order) *The night cometh and alſo the morning*; the morning is approaching, that admitteth of no following night. There is that fourth property of Faith, it is the grace that keepeth a Chriſtian in perſeverance, by its building upon the Rock. Hence it is called a *leaning upon God*: For a Chriſtian by Faith doth perpetually joyn himſelf to Chriſt, ſo that whatever trouble he be caſt into by Faith, he cometh out of *that wilderneſs leaning upon his beloved*, and by Faith he is led up *to the rock that is higher then he*, where he may ſit in ſafety, and even *laugh at death and deſtruction*, when aſſailing him. There is that fifth property of Faith: that it is the grace that bringeth ſatisfaction unto the ſpiritual ſenſes of a Chriſtian, by a cloſe and particular application of Chriſt as the nouriſhment of the ſoul. Hence it is called an *eating of the fleſh of Chriſt.* There are three ſenſes that Faith ſatisfieth; Faith ſatisfieth the ſenſe of ſight, it ſatisfieth the ſenſe of taſte, and it ſatisfieth the ſenſe of touch: Faith it will make a Chriſtian *handle that eternal word of life*: Faith will make a Chriſtian ſee *that noble plant of renown*: And Faith will make a Chriſtian *taſte and ſee how gracious the Lord is.* And no doubt, theſe that have once ſatisfied their ſight, they will be longing to ſatisfie their taſte. There is that ſixth property of Faith. It is that grace which giveth reſt unto a Chriſtian: Hence it is called *a caſting of our burthen upon him*: It is, as it were, the ſoul giving unto Chriſt that unſupportable yoak of our iniquities, and taking from Chriſt that eaſie and portable yoak of his Commandments. And ſeventhly, There is that laſt property of Faith; it

it is that grace by which Sanctification is promoved: Hence it is called a *coming to Christ*: It is the soul in a divine motion and travelling from the land of *Egypt* unto the land of *Canaan*: Faith is the soul in a pleasant motion from the land of the north, the land of our captivity, unto the land of perfect liberty, all along going out by *the footsteps of the flock and walking in that new and living way*, even in him *who is the way, the Truth and the Life*.

And now for a more full application of this, we shall speak but to two things further. 1. We would have it considered, that there are some that come unto the Covenant of Promise with less difficulty, and after a more divine and evangelick way; and there are some that close with Christ, in a more difficult and legal way; there are some that before they can come to mount Sion they must dwell fourty days at mount Sinai. There are some, before the decree of heaven shall be given to them, they must roar as an ox, and must cover themselves with sackcloath having ashes upon their heads. We must be a *Benoni*, before we be a *Benjamin*: that is, we must be a son of sorrow, before we can be a son of *consolation*, But this is certain, that Christ leadeth sometimes some to himself through a valley of roses: & I would only have you taking notice of these two, which though we conceive they be not infallible in the rule, yet oftentimes experience maketh them out to be truth. That there are three sorts of persons who are most ordinarily brought under great terror, ere they close with Christ. First, These who have committed some gross and abominable sin that is most contradicting unto the light of nature. Secondly, That person that sinneth much against light; before conversion. Hence it is observed in all the Books of the Gospel, and in the book of the *Acts*, there was more Gospel and love-way of converting the Gentiles, then was of converting

ting the Jews, see *Act.* 2. 37. there is a sharp Law exercised among them who had crucified the Lord of Life, and *Act.* 9. *Paul* that had been a grievous persecuter, at his conversion, he is first stricken dead to the ground before he be made a captive of the love of Christ, and constrained to cry out, *what wilt thou have me to do* but look to *Act.* 8. & chap. 19. and there ye will find a more fair and smooth way of begetting sons to Christ. And, thirdly, that person that is much in conceit of his own righteousness, he useth to be brought to Christ through much terror and exercise of the Law: that is clear in *Paul*, his condition also, *Phil.* 3. and *Act.* 9. compared, and certainly, whoever thinketh to come that length in self-abasement, and will count as the Apostle doth in that chapter, must dwell many days at *Mount Sinai*, and learn his Arithmetick there. 2. We would have you taking notice of this, that though the person that is brought to Christ in a more smooth and evangelick way may have the preheminency of the person that is brought to Christ after a more legal and terrible way in some things, yet we conceive, that a Christian that is brought to Christ through much of the exercise of the Law, and through many of the thundrings of mount Sinai, after he hath wone to see his right of Christ, he is more constant in the exercise of Faith; and the reason of it is, because that an ordinary ground of misbelief is our not distinct uptaking either of the time of our conversion, which is oftentimes hid from these persons that are converted in a more evangelick way, as likewise this, that those persons that are brought to Christ in a more Gospel chariot, are sometimes put to debates, whether ever they were under the exercise of the Law, and this maketh them often (as it were) to raze the foundation, and to cry forth, *My hope, and my strength, is perished from the Lord.* And how-

now to ſhut up our diſcourſe, we ſhall add this one word of exhortation; that ye would carefully lay hold upon that noble object, and exerciſe your faith upon him; and I ſhall ſay but this, that all theſe that have this noble grace of Faith, and that are heirs of that everlaſting inheritance: There is a fourfold Crown prepared for you; There is a Crown of life that is prepared for him that ſhall *fight that good fight of Faith*; but what may you ſay is a Crown of Life, except we have joy waiting upon that Life; for what is Life without Joy, but a bitterneſs, and a burthen to it ſelf; Therefore ye ſhall have *a crown of joy*; but what were a crown of Life, and a crown of Joy, except we hade the grace of Holineſs, and were compleat in that; Therefore, ye ſhall have alſo *a crown of righteouſneſs*: But what were Life, Joy and Righteouſneſs, without Glory: Therefore ye ſhall have likewiſe *a crown of Glory*: But what of all theſe, if that crown ſhould once fall from our head, and we ſhould be deprived of our Kingdom? Therefore, take this to make up all the reſt, It is *an eternal crown of Glory*, That word in *Prov.* 27. near the cloſe, *The crown* ſaith *Solomon*, *doth not endure for ever*: But this precious Crown that the hands of Chriſt ſhall fix upon the head of an overcoming Chriſtian, this is the motto that is engraven upon it, *unchangeable and Eternal*, *Eternal and unchangeable.* And O what a day ſuppoſe ye ſhall that be, when that precious Crown ſhall be put upon our heads? What think ye will be the difference betwixt Chriſt and the Believers in Heaven? They ſhall have theſe four crowns which are indeed one: but Chriſt ſhall have upon his head many Crowns, according to that word, *Rev.* 19. 12. But let me ſay one word alſo to you who are ſtrangers from God, and are deſtitute of the grace of Chriſt, and will not by faith cloſe with this excellent object, There is a four fold

fold crown that once ſhall be put upon your heads, but do not miſinterpret the viſion: There is a difference betwixt the *Butler* and the *Baker*; ye may propheſie good things to your ſelves, but there is a crown of death which ye ſhall once have put upon your heads; ye ſhall be always dying, and never able to die: There is a crown of ſorrow that ye ſhall have put upon your heads, when ye ſhal eternally ſigh forth that lamentation; *O to be annihilate and reduced unto nothing*; when the reduction of you into nothing would be a heaven, when ye ſhall be tormented in thoſe everlaſting flames. And I would ſay this by the way, ye will be all miſerable, and comfortleſs one to another, there will be no ground of conſolation that ye ſhall reap, for the community of your ſorrow ſhall increaſe the degrees of that ſorrow; And there is another crown alſo that ye ſhall put on, and that is a crown of *ſin*, inſtead of that *crown of righteouſneſs*: would ye know your exerciſe. O ye that are predeſtinate unto theſe everlaſting pains? Would ye know your exerciſe? It is this, ye ſhall eternally *blaſpheme* and *curſe* the God that made you. I am perſwaded of this, that the terrours of hell will afflict you more, and doth, then that of the ſinning perpetually in hel: Ye would think nothing many of you to be in hell, if there were no pain there; for the exerciſe of ſin it will be your delight and life: but be perſwaded of it, that when your conſcience is awaked, the exerciſe of ſinning ſhall exceedingly aggravate your pain. And there is this crown laſtly, that ye ſhall put on, and that is the *crown of ſhame*: The Prophet *Iſaiah* maketh mention of *a crown of pride*; but ye that have put on that crown of everlaſting *confuſion and ſhame*, when ye ſhall not be able to lift up your eyes to him *whom ye have pierced*; I would fain deſire you to know, what will be your exerciſe at theſe three days? What will be your exerciſe when death ſhall be ſummoning

monding you to remove, and ye shall first be entered heirs unto these everlasting pains; I am perswaded ye will reflect much: will ye not reflect upon many Sermons that ye have heard, wherein ye have been invited to partake of the sweet offers of Salvation? I remember of one that upon his death bed cryed forth, *A world for time, a world for one inch of time*, one that perhaps did hold his head high, and no doubt was greater than the greatest here, his crown could not purchase one inch of time, but dying with this, *Call time again, call time again*; that petition was denyed, and so shall it be, I fear, to the most part that are here, I think it was a pretty Hieroglyphick of the *Egyptian*, they painted Time with three heads; The first head that painted out Time that was past, *Was a greedy Wolf gaping*, which importeth this, That our Time past was misspent, and there was nothing left; but like a Wolfe to gape for it again: And there was that second head of a *roaring Lyon round*, which imports the time present, and for this end was so painted, that people might lay hold upon their present opportunities otherwise: it would be the matter of their ruine, and of their eternal undoing: And there was that last head, which was a *deceitful Dog fawning*; which signifieth, that people they deceive themselves with the time to come, thinking they will be religious at their death, and that they will overcome at their death, but this is flattery, no better then the fawning of a mad Dog. I think we may learn much of this, even to be provoked to lay hold upon our golden opportunities, that we sell not our time, but that we buy it. There are two things that a Christian must not sell, that is, sell not *the truth*, but buy it, and sell not *your time, but buy it*. I am perswaded of this, that one moment of Time is worth ten thousand worlds, if improved; And I would ask you, what advantage shall ye have of all things that ye have tormented-

mented your selves about, when time shall be no more I suppose indeed, this is an ordinary evil amongst the people of this age, of which we have our own share and portion. There are many that envy Godliness, and the Godly, *the excellent ones that are in the earth*, that think it is pleasure to vent their malice against such; I know that ordinary practice, it is older by a thousand years then themselves, that they persecute Godliness under the name of hypocrisie; They call Godliness hypocrisie, and upon that account they begin and speak maliciously against it; only I would ask you this question, what will you say in that day when Christ will ask that question at you, that *Gideon* asked at *Zeba* and *Zalmuna*, who are these that ye killed with your tongue? Must it not be answered, *Every one did resemble the person of a King*? O will ye not believe! will ye not close with Christ? I know it is ordinary that we run up these two extreems, Sometimes we do not believe the threatnings of the Law, and sometimes we will not believe the promises of the Gospel. But I would only desire to know, what if it had been so ordered in the infinite wisdom of God, that all the Letters of this Book should have been threatnings; what should have been our lot; if all the Promises should have been scraped out of it; But certainly this must be your lot, all the promises of the Book of the Covenant shall be taken from you, and all the curses thereof shall be a flying Roll, that shall enter within your houses, and shall there eternally remain. Know this, O ye that are enemies to Christ, know it, and think upon it. *Every battel of the warriour is with confused noise, and with garments rolled in blood*: But that war that Christ shall have against the *hypocrites in Zion*, and those that are ignorant of him, and will not close with him, it shall be *with flowel of fire and eternal indignation*. O what will be your thoughts, suppose

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pose you, when Christ shall come with that two edged sword of the fury of the Lord, to enter to fight with you? It is no delightsome exercise. O that ye were not *almost*, but *altogether perswaded to be Christians*, and that once Christ might conquer you with that two edged sword *that proceedeth out of his mouth*, that so you might subject your selves to Him, and make Him the object of your Faith. Now to Him that hath engraven upon His *vesture, and on his thigh, that He is the King of kings, and the Lord of Lords*, we desire to give praise.

A SERMON
Concerning the GREAT SALVATION.

Heb. 2. 3. *How shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.*

THis everlasting Gospel, which is preached unto you, is that glorious Star, which must lead us to the place where blessed Christ doth lie. This Gospel and glad tydings of this great salvation, is come near unto you; And Christ is standing at the everlasting doors of your hearts, desiring that ye would open unto him. There is that one great request which Heaven, this day hath to present unto you, and it is, That ye would at last imbrace this great salvation, freely offered by him. It is the thing for which ye are called to mourn this day, that since the days of your fathers, and since the beginning of your own days, ye have

have stopped your ears from that sweet and chaunting voice of this blessed Charmer, *Ye would never dance to Christ when he piped, neither would ye weep to him when he lamented.*

But to come to the words which we have read unto you; The Apostle in the former Chapter hath been discoursing most divinely of the matchless and incomparable excellencies which are in our blessed Lord Jesus; And in the first verse of this second Chapter, he draweth forth an exhortation from his former Doctrine, which in short, is this, That they would take heed to the blessed Doctrine of the Gospel; *And not at any time to let it slip out of our minds*, and that they would keep this Gospel as a Jewel of great price, and would not sell it, but that they would be induced to buy it. And this Exhortation he presseth by two Arguments.

The first Argument is in the second *verse*, where he saith, *If the word spoken by Angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward, &c.* That is, if the transgression of the Law, which was delivered but by the Ministry of *Angels*, and every disobedience to it was so severely punished, Let that provoke you to take heed, that ye transgres not the precious Gospel which was spoken by the Lord himself.

The second Argument is in the words which we have read unto you, and it is taken from the certain and infallible stroak of the Justice of God, which shall come upon those who slight this great salvation; It is impossible (saith he) that there can be a city of refuge for those who slight this *great salvation*.

Now in the words which we have read, there are these six things to be considered.

I. First, That it is an evil incident to the hearers of this precious Gospel and Great Salvation, to slight and undervalue it; This is clearly presupposed in the

the words, otherwiſe there had been no ground, or acceſs for the Apoſtle to threaten ſo terrible things againſt the ſlighters of it.

II. The ſecond thing to be conſidered in the words, is, That the ſtroak and ruine of thoſe who ſlight this great ſalvation, is certain, and infallible, it will ſurely come upon them: This is clear from theſe words, *How ſhall we eſcape?* As if he had ſaid, there is no imaginable way for us to eſcape, if we neglect (this) ſo *Great Salvation*: we may have a city of refuge when we are purſued by the Law; or, when we are purſued by afflictions, and we may eſcape when we are purſued, otherwiſe by the Juſtice of God; but if once we ſlight this great ſalvation, there remaineth no city of refuge (no door of eſcape left open) unto us: for where will the perſon flee that ſlighteth this great ſalvation?

III. There is this third thing whereof we ſhall take notice from the words, That the ſtroak of the Juſtice of God cometh juſtly upon them who ſlight this great ſalvation; and truly it is a moſt equal and reaſonable ſtroak, which is alſo clear from the words, *How ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great a ſalvation!* where he puts it home to their conſciences, as if he had ſaid, think ye not that it is juſt and righteous that (if ye ſlight this great ſalvation) there ſhould not be a door of eſcape left open unto you? He putteth the queſtion home to their conſcience to anſwer, yea, or no.

IV. The fourth thing to be conſidered in the words, is this, That the ſlighting this great ſalvation is a ſin that hath many aggravations, which attend and wait upon it. And it hath two aggravations from the words which I have read; The firſt *great aggravation*, in that word of the Text, *Great Salvation*, as if he had ſaid, if it were not a *Great Salvation*, ye might have ſome cloak or excuſe for your ſlighting of it: but ſeeing

ſeeing it is ſuch a great and eternal ſalvation, there is now no cloak left for your ſin. The ſecond aggravation is from the certainty of this Salvation, in theſe words, *which at firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by thoſe that heard him*, viz. *his Apoſtles*, whereby he telleth them, this great ſalvation is no notion nor fancy; but a moſt certain, ſure and real ſalvation which yet they ſlight.

V. The fifth thing whereof we ſhall take notice from the words, is this, That there are no perſons (be who they will, Miniſter or people) who ſlight this great ſalvation, that ſhall have a door of eſcape. Hence is it, that the Apoſtle putteth himſelf among the reſt, ſaying, *How ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great ſalvation?* That is, *How ſhall I Paul eſcape, if I neglect ſo great ſalvation; and ſo fruſtrate the grace of God?*

VI. Sixthly, We would take notice of this from the words, That not only heart-deſpiſing of this great ſalvation, but even alſo the neglecting of it, hath a certain infallible and unſpeakeable ruling attending upon it.

Now before we ſpeak to any of theſe ſix things (which we have obſerved from the words) There are theſe two things whereunto we ſhall ſpeak a little for clearing of the words. Firſt, What is meaned here by *Great Salvation*; Secondly, How is it ſaid that Chriſt was *firſt Preacher of it*.

Firſt. we conceive that by the great ſalvation, is underſtood the Goſpel, as is clear, *Eph.* 1. 13. Where it is called, *the Goſpel of our ſalvation*, and *Acts* 13. 26. it is called *the word of this ſalvation*; So that by the word of this Salvation, is underſtood the Goſpel, and theſe precious offers which are contained in it. And we conceive, it may be called a Great-Salvation, in theſe eight reſpects.

I. Firſt,

I. First, It is called the great salvation, in respect of the price that was laid down for it; There being no less price laid down to purchase this great salvation, then the *blood of the Son of God.* From whence then doth Salvation flow unto you? It comes running to you in a stream of the bloud of the Son of God, This is clear, *Heb.* 9. 12. *Neither by the bloud of Goats and Calves; but by his own bloud he entered in once into the holy place, obtained eternal redemption for us.*

II. Secondly, It is called a great salvation, in respect of the many difficulties and oppositions which lie in the way of bringing it about. What great impediments (suppose ye) lay in Christs way, before he could accomplish and bring about this great salvation? Was not the Justice of God to be satisfied? Was he not to die, and be made like unto one of us? Was he not to lie in the grave? And was he not to bear the torments of hell, before this great salvation could be accomplished and brought to pass? There were such impediments in the way of bringing about this great salvation, that if all the Angels in Heaven had been set to the work, they had been all crushed under it, had it been but that one great impediment, to *satisfie the Justice*, and pacifie the wrath of God, even that was a passe, through which none could go, but the eternal Son of God; It was so guarded, that none durst adventure to enter it (much less could any win through it) save he only, *who was mighty to save.*

III. Thirdly, It is called a great salvation, in respect of that high estimation which the Saints have of it. O what an high estimation have the Saints of this Gospel Salvation! There is no mercy which they think comparable to this, all other mercies are but little *Zoars* in comparison of this great Mercy, and Gospel Salvation.

IV.

IV. Fourthly, It is called a great salvation, in respect of these noble effects, which this Salvation bringeth about, and produceth. Some of the great effects of the Gospel, *David* hath cleared, *Psal.* 19. 7, 8, 9, 10. Is not this a great effect, (of this Gospel Salvation) to bring us out of nature into an estate of grace? And that is an effect of this great salvation? Is not this a great effect, to make us who were enemies, become friends? And that is an effect of this great salvation; Is not this a great effect, to make us who were moving in the way to hell, move in the way to Heaven? And that is an effect of this great salvation: Is not this a great effect, to make us who were *far off*, to be now *made near*? And yet that is an effect of this great salvation. And is not this a great effect, to make us *who were darkness, to become light in the Lord?* And that is the great effect of this Gospel salvation? Yea, I may say, time would fail me to tell of all the great effects of this great salvation; But O will ye come and see, and that will best resolve the question unto you, what the noble effects of this great salvation are.

V. Fifthly, It is called a great salvation, in respect of the great advantages which doth redound to the person who imbraceth it. First, Is not Heaven a noble advantage? and that is the gain, which attendeth the imbracers of this great salvation. Secondly, Is not Jesus Christ a notable advantage? And yet he is the advantage which attendeth the imbracers of this great salvation: Thirdly, Is not eternal communion with God a notable advantage? And that advantage attendeth the imbracers of this great salvation. Fourthly, Is not eternal liberation from the body of death, a great advantage? And that attendeth the imbracers of this great salvation. Fifthly, Is not eternal singing in the enjoyment of God a great advantage? and that attendeth the imbracers

bracers of this Salvation. Sixthly, Is not eternal seeing of God as he is, a great and noble advantage? And yet this (as all the former) attendeth the imbracers of this great salvation. Would ye be honourable? Come and imbrace this great salvation. Would ye be eternally happy? O then come and partake of this great salvation.

VI. Sixthly, It is called a great salvation in respect of all other Salvations that ever were accomplished. There was never a salvation, or victory obtained by any General or Captain (unto a Land or People) that could have the name of great salvation in comparison of this.

VII. Seventhly, It is called a great salvation, in respect of the Authority of it. We have spoken of the greatnels (as to the meritorious cause) of it, and how great things it doth effectuate: and also in respect of the authority of it, it is a great salvation. Would ye know who is the author of this great salvation? It is Christ, *Heb.* 5. 9. *He became the Author of eternal Salvation to all them that obey him.* And must not this salvation be suitable to him who is the Author of it. This is one of the most noble and irradiant beams of the Majesty of the Son of God the Mediator, that he is the Author of this great salvation.

VIII. Eighthly, It is called a great salvation, in respect of the continuance and duration of it. It is not a salvation which is but for a day: but it is an eternal Salvation, *Heb.* 9. 12. *He obtained eternal redemption for us.*

Now the second thing whereunto we shall speak, for clearing of the words, is this, *viz.* How is it said, That Christ was the first Preacher of this eternal salvation? We do not think that the words are thus to be understood, that the Gospel, and this great salvation was never preached before Christ came

came in the flesh; but we think the meaning of the words may be one of these three, if not all of them.

I. First, That all the preaching of this great salvation under the Law, did come very far short in the point of fulness, in comparison of Christs preaching of it; Therefore is Christ said to be the first Preacher of this great salvation: As if he had said, I know *Adam*, he preached of this great salvation: and *Enoch*, he preached of this great salvation: And the twelve Patriarchs, they preached of this great salvation: And all the Prophets who went before Christ, and are now in Heaven, they preached of this great salvation; But all their preaching deserved not the name of preaching in comparison of Christ; for, *Never man spake as he spake.* Thus Christ was the first great preacher of this great salvation.

II. Secondly, This may be the meaning of it, that Christ was the first Preacher of this great salvation, in respect of his clear way of Preaching of it: for he was the first Preacher of it without Types and Shadows, he was first preacher of it clearly and fully, with so much demonstration and power of the Spirit.

III. Thirdly, The meaning of this (that Christ was the first preacher of this great salvation) may relate to his appearing to *Adam* in Paradise, when he became the first & great Preacher of this Salvation, when he did speak that word unto him, *The Seed of the woman shall tread down the head of the Serpent.* The first glorious preaching of this great salvation was, when Christ preached it to *Adam* in Paradise. And that was the first and glorious morning of this blessed Gospel.

Now we shall speak a little to the first of these six things which we observed from the words, *viz.*

That there are many within the visible Church, who are neglecters and slighters of this great salvation; (do you not all take with it?) It is clear, *Mat.* 23. towards the close, and chap. 22. 5. Where

thes

theſe perſons being invited to come to the marriage, or feaſt of the Goſpel, It is ſaid of them, *They made light of it.* Which are the ſame words in our Text. And *Luke* 14. 18. When they were invited to come, it is ſaid, *They all with one conſent began to make their excuſe.* And *Iſa.* 28. 2. *This is the reſt wherewith ye ſhall make them weary to reſt, this is the refreſhing, yet they will not hear.* Now is there a perſon here who dare deny this charge, that he is a ſlighter of this great ſalvation? I confeſs, I am afraid that ye will not take with it; Therefore I ſhall propoſe eight ſorts of perſons who are ſlighters of this great ſalvation. And I charge you, as you will anſwer to God one day, that ye ſearch your hearts, whether ye be among the number (in the Catalogue) of the ſlighters of this great ſalvation.

I. The firſt ſort of perſons, who are ſlighters of this great ſalvation, are theſe perſons who go about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs, and will not ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of Chriſt (in a word) It is that ſort of perſons who think they may win to heaven by a Covenant of Works, and will not take the Goſpels way of travelling to Heaven in the Covenant of Grace. And ſurely there is not a perſon here, who hath not that curſed inclination to be as little oblieged to Chriſt (for his ſalvation) as he can. We would go to Heaven without *the Way*, which is Chriſt. And (believe me) there are many in this congregation, who go thus about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs. And I ſhall propoſe ſix ſorts of perſons who fall under the firſt rank.

1. The firſt ſort are theſe who truſt on their own ivility, and think theſe will carry them to Heaven; heſe are the perſons who go about to eſtabliſh their n righteouſneſs. Say they, I defy the World to any thing to me, *I was evermore an honeſt man,* I truſt therefore that I ſhall go to Heaven; But I ſay

I ſay to thee, (O atheiſt that thou art) thou ſhalt never win to heaven by theſe means, till thou come to Chriſt with this, *All my righteouſneſs is like filthy rags.*

2. The ſecond ſort are theſe, who build their confidence upon their denial of their good works, but yet come never this length to make uſe of Jeſus Chriſt.

3. The third ſort are theſe, who build their confidence upon their duties; They think they will come to heaven by their good prayers, by their reading, and by their faſting, (like unto that Phariſee, *Luke* 18. 11.) *I thank God I am not like other men: for I faſt twice in the week, I pay tithes of all that I poſſeſs;* But I ſay unto thee, thy duties will never bring thee to heaven, if Chriſt be not the end of all thy duties, nor can ye perform any duty without him.

4. The fourth ſort of perſons who fall under this firſt rank of ſlighters of the Great Salvation are thoſe who truſt on their convictions. If they have once been convinced of their ſin and miſerable eſtate, they think there is no more to do, Chriſt will never reject them, ſo they ſit down and build their hope upon theſe convictions.

5. The fifth ſort of perſons are thoſe who build their confidence upon their reſolutions. Say they, oftentimes have I reſolved to be a better man then I am: therefore I think (which is the fearful deluſion of many) that *God will accept the will for the deed:* But it had been good for many, ſuch a word had not been in the Bible; or that their curſed eyes had never read it. But know this, that though thou haſt as ſtrong reſolutions as *Peter*, or as good wiſhes as *Balaam* had, if thou never labour to bring them to practice, God ſhall ſay to thee, *Depart from me, I know you not.* Any of you who build upon your reſolutions, ye build upon a ſandy foundation, theſe being many times a *goodneſs but like the morning dew.*

6. And the ſixth ſort of perſons who fall under this firſt rank of ſlighters of this great ſalvation (and wherein the evil is moſt ſubtile) are theſe who build their ſalvation upon their graces; theſe alſo go about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs: But I ſay to thee, Thy graces cannot be the foundation of thy hope, although they may be as evidences to ſtrengthen thy hope. Now are there none here who fall under this firſt rank of ſlighters of this great ſalvation; or are there none here who will confeſs that they have gone about to eſtabliſh their own righteouſneſs? I ſay to thee, who wilt confeſs, put a rope about thy neck, and come to Chriſt; for he is a merciful King: I ſay to thee, come to Chriſt with this, *All my righteouſneſs is like filthy rags*: And if thou wilt come with this in ſincerity, he ſhall ſay, *Bring forth the white robe and put it upon him*: If thou canſt be brought to ſpeak that in ſincerity to Chriſt, there ſhall be no more betwixt Chriſt and thee, But, *Come and cloath him with the white robe.*

2. Secondly, Theſe perſons ſlight the great ſalvation, who delay their taking hold of the precious offers of the Goſpel: For there are many (when we preach this Goſpel, and when we hold out the great Salvation unto them) who ſay I *will follow Chriſt, But I muſt firſt go home and bury my father*; (and ſo they delay to take hold of this great ſalvation) But I ſay to you (who ever ye be) that thus delay to take hold on this great ſalvation, ye are the ſlighters of it. Is there a perſon within theſe doors, who dare, but acknowledge that he hath ſlighted this great ſalvation, and delayed to imbrace it? O tell me! What do your conſciences ſpeak? Are there any but they muſt acknowledge they come under the ſecond rank? And I ſay to you, who have thus delayed, will ye yet imbrace it? I ſay even unto you who are old men (now [illegible]ty years, and have ſlighted this great ſalvation ſo

ſo long) yet this day this great ſalvation is offered unto you? What ſay ye to it? O what do you ſay to this offer? Are ye ſaying I muſt now delay (and not receive this great ſalvation) till my harveſt be by, and over? I ſay unto thee, that the Harveſt of the Wrath of God is ripe, and he ſhall put in his ſickle, and cut thee down. I will ſay no more to theſe who thus ſlight this great ſalvation, but this, *Why ſtand ye all the day in the Market place idle, and doing nothing.* O will ye at laſt be induced to take and imbrace this Great ſalvation, before it be hid from your eyes.

III. Thirdly, Theſe perſons are the ſlighters of this great ſalvation, who complement with Chriſt when they are invited to come and partake of it: And ſay ſilently to the Miniſter, (or rather to their own conſciences) *I pray you have me excuſed at this time*, as theſe, *Luke* 14. 18. But I would only ask at ſuch, have ye any lawful excuſe, why ye will not come and partake of this great ſalvation? Is there any perſon here, that hath any lawful excuſe to preſent? I ſhall never take that off your hand, *Have me excuſed*; But be ſure of this, it ſhall never excuſe you, but accuſe you. Therefore I deſire that theſe perſons, who have ſlighted this great ſalvation, by complementing with Chriſt, that they would complement no more with him at all, but now imbrace it.

IV. The fourth ſort of perſons who ſlight this great ſalvation, are theſe who give way to diſcouragement and unbelief, ſo that they will not come and partake of this great ſalvation: I ſay, ſuch of you are ſlighters of it, and Chriſt will eſteem you ſuch. Oh if ye knew the worth and vertue of this great ſalvation, there would not be a temptation you could meet with, that would hinder you from imbracing it, but if thou could not anſwer theſe temptations, thou would not own them. I ſay unto ſuch

undervaluers and slighters of the Great Salvation as discouraged persons, (*And these who stay long in the place of the breaking forth of Children*) that when ye cannot answer your objections, which hinder you from closing with Christ, I intreat you disown them, as if you heard them not: Say ye, Think ye this lawful? I say, it is both lawful and expedient, for it was the practice of believing *Abraham*, *He considered not his own body*, being dry, as an old stick, *Nor the deadness of Sarahs womb.* He did not consider these things which might have been objections to keep him from believing. He might have started at these two objections. Alace, I am old, and that objection could he not answer: And my wife is past child bearing, neither could he answer that objection. What then did he with them? He slighted them both, and considered them not. Secondly, I would say this to you, who thus slight it because of discouragements: If ye did know the worth of the Great Salvation, which is in this Gospel Redemption, that is offered unto you, although ye had an army of objections to go through, ye would go through them all, *To get a drink of the water of this well of Bethlehem.*

V. The fifth sort of persons who slight this Great Salvation, are these who will not do so much as take care, and give pains to hear this Great Salvation offered unto them; for there are some persons (who if they come to the Church) desire to sit fartherest off, and so never take care to hear a word of this Great Salvation: And are such dreadful slighters of it, like unto these mentioned, *Jer.* 6. 10. *To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear? Behold their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken*, Isa. 28.2. *But they would not hear*, Jer. 7. 10. *Who say, we are delivered to do all these abominations*: yet they did *come and stand before him, in the House which was called by his Name.*

VI.

VI. Sixthly, These persons are slighters of this Great Salvation, (who when they hear it) are no more (nay not so much) affected with it, then if we were telling unto them the most sensless history of *Thomas the Rymor*, or some other old fable; like unto these mentioned, *Jer.* 6. 10. *The word of the Lord is unto them a reproach, they have no delight in it.* I would pose you all as in the sight of the Author of this Great Salvation, (men or women) did you ever set your selves (or took ye ever pains) to bring up your hearts to the love of this Great Salvation? was it ever the rejoycing of your hearts that Christ died and rose again? I do certainly believe it (and I am perswaded) that there are decrees past in Heaven against many of you, *That in hearing ye shall hear, but not understand; and in seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive*: For God hath made your hearts harder then the Flint, or Adamant; so that ye shall refuse to return when he doth exhort you. Believe me, (if I may so speak) I think there is as much probability that the stones of the Wall would hear (if we would speak to them) as soon as many of you.

VII. Seventhly, These persons are slighters of the Great Salvation, who did never complain that they wanted a right to this Great Salvation. I hope some of you are now convinced that ye never came within the compass of this Great Salvation: I say yet unto you, if ye did never spend one hour in secret weeping and lamenting, because ye had not a right to this Gospel Redemption, it is but too probable you never yet had a right to it. Yea, know it, that such of you would little care to let precious Christ depart without any grief of heart; I think if this were voiced within this house to day, whether or not shall Christ go and depart, I doubt if there would be many heart dissenters, though many Tongue-dissenters: Oh, I fear there would be many hear-

here saying, O Christ, depart and go thy way: yea, there are many *Gaderens* here, *who prefer their kine and swine to precious Christ, and would beseech him to go out of their coasts.*

VIII. Eighthly, These persons slight the great salvation, who never took pains to engage their hearts to take hold of Christ and the Gospel, Christ is near to you this day: The great salvation is near to you, and is now, even now offered unto you; Therefore are there any who will take pains to lay hold on it? I obtest you all who are here, by the beauty and excellency of him who is the Author of this great salvation, that ye come and partake of it; I *obtest you* by all the joyes of heaven that ye imbrace this great salvation, I *obtest you* by all the terrours in hell, that ye imbrace it, I *obtest you* by the promises of the everlasting Covenant, that ye imbrace it, I *obtest you* by all the curses that are written in this Book of the Covenant that ye imbrace it, I *obtest you* by the love ye owe to your immortal souls, that ye would once be wise, and come and partake of this great salvation. May I now have it, saith thou? Yea, I say unto you all, ye may have it to day, ye may be partakers of it before ye go hence: And so before I proceed any further, I do in the Name and Authority of him who sent me here to day, (and is the Author of this great salvation) freely offer it unto you; Therefore take it of my hand, embrace this great salvation offered to you to day; But I know there will be eight sorts of humors within this house to day, in relation to this great salvation, which is now offered unto you.

I. I think there will be some of *Gallio's* disposition here to day, that will care for none of these things; Yea, there are many here who will not give a fig for this rich offer of the great salvation; But, I say, cursed be that person who puts on *Gallio's* temper

per (to day) that will care for none of these things.

2. I fear there will be many of *Pilats* humor here (to day) who will say, they find nothing against the man; yet will cry forth, *Take him and crucifie him.* They find no fault with Christ, and yet will be content that he be crucified. Now can ye say any thing against Christ, who is the Author of this great salvation? Produce your strong arguments, are there any here who have any thing to say against Him? I am here to answer in His Name: I hope there is not one here who hath any thing to say against the Author of this great salvation; And why then do ye not take him? See unto your selves, that there be none of *Pilats* humor here to day, that will cry out, *Ye find nothing in Christ why he should not be received*, and yet will be content, *that he be crucified.*

3. There will be many of the Jews humor here to day, who cry forth, *Away with Christ, away with Christ, and give me Barabbas.* But oh! what a hellish word is that, *Away with spotless Christ; away with transcendent Christ, and give us the world?* Now are there any here who will be so gross slighters of this great salvation: Will ye slight this great salvation, and imbrace your idols, which shall once prove a crown of thorns unto you?

4. There will be some of *Felix* humor found here to day, that will say, *O Christ, go away at this time, and I will hear thee at a more convenient season.* But, I say unto you who will not hear me to day, nor imbrace this great salvation, I shall defy all the Ministers in *Scotland* to assure you, that ye shall get another offer, if ye send me away to day. There is not one that can, or dare, engage, that the great salvation shall be in your offer any more. Therefore I say, let none of *Felix* temper be here to day, that will say, *They will hear Christ at a more convenient season.*

5. There will be ſome of *Balaams* temper (to day) who will deſire *To die the death of the righteous*, and to have their *laſt end* like his; yet they deſire not to live the life of the righteous. But I ſay unto you, ye ſhall never die the death of the righteous, if ye live not the life of the righteous.

6. There will be ſome of you here (to day) who (I hope) at leaſt, will be of *Agrippa's* humor, that will ſay, *Thou haſt almoſt perſwaded me to be a Chriſtian.* I ſay unto thee, O will thou quickly out with that word *almoſt*, and put in that word *altogether*, and ſay, O precious Chriſt, *Thou haſt altogether perſwaded me to be a Chriſtian.* However, if thou come no greater length, I intreat thee come this length, that ſo thou may cry out, *I am almoſt perſwaded to embrace Chriſt the Great Salvation*; and may be ere long ye will come further.

7. There will be ſome of *Judas* temper (here to day) *who will betray Chriſt for thirty pieces of ſilver*; Yea, ſome would ſell Chriſt, Heaven, their idols and all, for leſs then *thirty pieces of ſilver.*

8. I think there will be many of *Eſaus* prophane temper here (to day) *who will ſell their Birth-right for a meſs of pottage.* Now will ye enquire at your ſelves, am I the perſon that will give *my birth-right for a meſs of pottage?* Doth my heart ſay, *I will ſell my birth-right, becauſe I am hungred, and ready to die? what will it profit me, give me a meſs of pottage, and I will quite my birth-right?* I know it, there are not a few ſuch here to day; Therefore I intreat you, enquire at your ſelves what is your humour. Oh ſhall the great ſalvatiou that ye have ſlighted ſo long, be ſlighred this day alſo, and ſhall there be none to imbrace it? Oh inquire, and ſtand in aw, leſt the wrath of the moſt high purſue you.

Now I ſhall give you theſe ſeven conſiderations, which may provoke you not to ſlight (but imbrace) this great ſalvation. 1. The

1. The firſt Conſideration, That the not imbracing of this great ſalvation is one of the greateſt acts of folly that can be, *Jer.* 8. 9. *They have rejected the word of the Lord*: (and immediatly it is ſubjoined) And, *what wiſdom is in them?* And ſo *Solomon* doth aſſure you they cannot be wiſe who neglect this great ſalvation, *Prov.* 1. 7. *Fools deſpiſe wiſdom and inſtruction.* Therefore, may I not ſay unto you, be who ye will (though ye were the greateſt heads of wit in all this place) ye are but ſtark fools as long as ye neglect this. But would ye be wiſe indeed, and wiſe unto *eternal life*: Then I intreat you come and imbrace this great ſalvation.

II. The ſecond conſideration, to provoke you not to ſlight the great ſalvation, is this, that the ruine and deſtruction of the ſlighters of it, is moſt certain and infallible, *Jer.* 11. 11. Where (ſpeaking of ſlighting the Covenant, which is indeed the ſame great ſalvation) there is a *Therefore* put to the threatning: *Therefore thus ſaith the Lord, I will bring evil upon them, which they ſhall not be able to eſcape.* I defy you all who are the ſlighters of this great ſalvation, to find a back door, when juſtice ſhall purſue you: For there is no door to eſcape if ye imbrace not this great ſalvation: But *the earth will diſcloſe your iniquity, and heaven will declare your ſin.*

III. Thirdly, Let this Conſideration provoke you not to ſlight this great ſalvation, that Chriſt is exceeding ſerious, and earneſt that ye would imbrace it. And I think that, *Iſa.* 28. 23. ſpeaketh out his exceeding ſeriouſneſs: where four times he beggeth of his hearers, that they would give ear and hear his voice (ſaying) *Give ear, and hear my voice, hearken, and hear my ſpeech.* What needeth all theſe exhortations? But that Chriſt is moſt ſerious, that they would imbrace the great ſalvation. And O that there were a perſon here (to day) as ſerious to t

bargain as Christ is! But, be who ye will that slight this great salvation, (believe me) the day is coming wherein ye shall cry out, alace for my slighting of it. Wilt thou therefore think presently with thy self (O thou slighter of this great salvation) what wilt thou say of thy slighting of it, when the devil shall be leading thee in thorow these dark gates of hell? O slighter of the Gospel, how many alaces wilt thou cry, when thou shalt be passing thorow these dark gates into thy everlasting prison? Wilt thou not then cry out, (O me, slighter of the everlasting Salvation) whether am I now going? Alace, now for my slighting of the Gospel: And as thou passest thorow, thou shalt meet with numbers of miserable comforters. There is not one in that prison who can comfort thee: But many dreadful alaces shalt thou then both cry and hear, if thou imbrace not this great salvation.

IV. Fourthly, Let this provoke you not to slight the great salvation, that ye will get it for a very look. O ye within this house to day, ye will get this great salvation for one look, *Isa.* 45. 22. *Look unto me and be saved, all the ends of the earth.* For a very look ye will get this great salvation: and do ye ever think to get Heaven at a lower rate?

V. The fifth Consideration, to provoke you not to slight this great salvation any more, is this, There is not one of you who is a slighter of it, but your slighting of it shall increase your immortal bonds, Man or Woman, be who thou wilt, when thou art slighting this great salvation, thou art but plating a cord wherewith to bind thy soul eternally in these unquenchable flames, *Isa.* 28. 22. *Be ye not mockers, lest your bonds be made strong.* I say therefore unto you, *Old men*, mock not, *lest your bonds be made strong*: *Old women*, near unto your Graves, mock not, *lest your bonds be made strong*. *Young men*, be ye not mockers,

ers, *lest your bonds be made strong*. *Young women*, who are in the flower of your time, mock not, *lest your bonds be made strong*. But now alace, will there (for all this) be a person here to day who will be a mocker of this great salvation.

VI. The sixth consideration, to provoke you not to slight this great salvation any more, is this, Ye know not but that your days may be near a close: I say, ye know not, but the day of the preaching of this great salvation may be near unto a close. What knowest thou, O man or woman, but this shall be the last Sermon that ever thou shalt hear concerning this great salvation? And yet for all all this, shall we be sent away without one consent to imbrace or receive it? O will ye be perswaded to look to Christ, and so to take him.

VII. The seventh consideration, to provoke you not to slight the great salvation, is this, that there is a five-fold Salvation comprehended under this great Salvation.

1. The first is this, come and partake of this great salvation, and thou shalt have salvation from thy idols: and hereby I do proclaim liberty (this day) unto captives. I am sent forth (this day) with the keys of your prison-house, to open your prison doors unto you, if ye will imbrace this great salvation. I say unto you, O ye *prisoners, come forth and shew your selves*; for the keyes of your prison-house are with us, to open your prison-doors unto you, therefore, O come forth and imbrace this great salvation. Will there be any (shall I think) here that will refuse to come forth, *O! go forth, and flee from the land of your captivity, and from the house of your bondage.*

II. Thou shalt have salvation from thy darkness, and from thy ignorance? I say unto you who understand no more of God then the stones in the wall,

co-

command you to come forth, and partake yet of this great ſalvation; and unto you ſhall light ariſe, even the day-ſpring from on high ſhall viſit you.

III. If ye will come and partake of this great ſalvation, ye ſhall have deliverance from all your fears. Doſt thou fear that thou ſhalt be poor: come and partake of this great ſalvation, and thou ſhalt be delivered from it? art thou afraid of hell? come and partake of this great ſalvation, and thou ſhalt be delivered from that fear. Art thou afraid at the wrath of God? Then come (I ſay) and partake of this great ſalvation, and thou ſhalt have redemption from that, and all thy fears, *with him is plenteous redemption, and he can make thee quiet from the fear of evil.*

IV. If thou wilt come and partake of this great ſalvation, thou ſhall have deliverance from all thy anxieties, and from all thy cares; ye are now careful and anxious about many things; come and partake of the great ſalvation, and it will make you careful but only for the *one thing neceſſary.*

V. If ye will come and embrace the great ſalvation offered unto you this day, ye ſhall be helped before ye go hence to ſing that ſong, *O death! where is thy ſting? O grave! where is thy victory?* Now, O will ye come and imbrace this great ſalvation, *And ye ſhall be more then conquerors thorow Chriſt who loveth you:* Are there therefore any here to day that would have victory over the devil, and over their own hearts? Then come and embrace this great ſalvation, and then your victory is certain.

But now to preſs home this great ſalvation upon you a little further, there are nine ſorts of perſons, who are invited to come and partake of this great ſalvation offered this day; And I charge you anſwer to your names when ye are called, and delay not to come.

I. Firſt, I invite and call here, to day, all who are willing to come and embrace this great ſalvation. Now, are there any of you here to day, who are called *willing?* then I invite you to come and imbrace this great ſalvation, *Rev.* 22. 17. *Whoſoever will, let him come*: But oh, are there none here to day who are named *willing?* I intreat you, if there be any, do not deny your name, but come when you are called and embrace this great ſalvation.

II. Secondly, Theſe perſons who thirſt for it, are invited to come, and partake of this great ſalvation, *Rev.* 22. 17. *Let him that is a thirſt come.* Now if there be any here who are named *thirſty*, let them come and partake of this great ſalvation, and they ſhall be ſatisfied.

III. Thirdly, Are there any money-leſs folk here to day? Let them come and partake of this great ſalvation; Are there no money-leſs folk here to day? I mean not that money or coin in your purſes, but want ye money? That is, want ye righteouſneſs? Then I pray you, come and partake of this great ſalvation. I ſay, are ye ſo poor, that ye have nothing but the fear of hell? Then I pray you come, If there be any here who have nothing to commend them to Chriſt, but neceſſity; I ſay unto all ſuch, *O come, come, come*, and partake of this great ſalvation.

IV. Fourthly, Theſe perſons are invited to come (and I wiſh there were many ſuch) who are *weary*. But Oh! are there none here to day who are called *weary?* Are ye not weary in purſuit of your ſins? If there be any ſuch here to day, I ſay unto you, O *weary folk, come, come, come*, and partake of this great ſalvation, and of this excellent Goſpel Redemption that was purchaſed at ſo dear a rate.

V. Fifthly, Theſe who are heavy loaden, are invited to come, (and I think all of you may anſwer this name) are ye *heavy loaden?* O then come, are there none here who are heavy loaden wi[th]

with misery, and estrangement from God? If there be any such here, I say unto thee, old man, or young man, be who thou wilt, O come, and partake of this great salvation.

VI. Sixthly, Are there any here to day, who are called blind? I say, if there be any of you who think ye want eyes to see the precious excellencies of Christ, I invite you to come and partake of this great salvation.

VII. Seventhly, Are there any who are called lame here to-day? I say unto such, *O come, come, come,* and partake of this great salvation: For we are sent forth to day, to call in the blind and the maimed, and the lame that they may come and imbrace this great salvation: Therefore there are none here to day who may be called such: Are ye neither blind nor lame? I hope many of you will not deny that ye are such; Therefore I say unto you, *O blind, halt, and maimed, come, come,* and partake of this great salvation.

VIII. The eight sort of persons invited, are these who are *sick*, therefore if there be any sick folk here to day, be who ye will, I say unto you, *O come* and partake of this great salvation, *For the whole need not the Physician, but the sick.*

IX. Ninthly, Are there any here to day who know not their name, or their condition, I say unto you, O nameless folk, come and partake of this great salvation, come to Christ for the knowledge of your souls condition, come as a nameless one, and he shall not reject thee though thy cause were so evil that thou could not give it a name; for, *Of all that come unto him he casteth none away.*

Now where do you find your name and firname? Do you not know it? I hope now you may know; therefore I intreat you answer to it, and so come and partake of this great salvation.

But

But I am afraid there be many strong iron-bars in the way of some of you, which ye cannot win over. Ah, how fast are some souls locked in Satans snare? And therefore I shal speak a little for discovering of these bars, that hinder from imbracing this great salvation, that so ye may be the better helped to remove them.

I. The first great iron bar which keepeth folk from imbracing this great salvation, is the bar of ignorance; and I am afraid, that this (as a mighty bar) hindereth many of you; Ye are ignorant of your selves, and of the condition of your soul, ye are ignorant of the Law & of its severity, and ye are ignorant of the precious Gospel in its condescendency. O pray unto God, that for Christs sake, he would break that great bar of ignorance; for till that be done, Christ may take up that complaint, *Jer.* 5. 4. *Surely they are foolish, they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgement of their God.* I say, this bar of ignorance keepeth you from embracing this great salvation.

II. The second bar which keepeth many from closing with Christ, is, the bar of *presumption*, for some will cry out, what need have I to imbrace the great salvation? Have I it not already? But I say unto thee, O fool, thou art (by all appearance) yet in bondage. O that this evil bar of presumption were put away; for it is one of the greatest impediments which lyeth in the way of your imbracing this great salvation that is in your offer to day; Therefore I say unto you, if you will come no further, I intreat you come to this length, to confess that ye want this Gospel Salvation, and that ye are indeed strangers to this Redemption purchased by Christ.

III. The third bar that keepeth persons from imbracing this great salvation, is the bar of *unbelief*; ye believe not what we say to you anent this great salvation. I know that some of you are of the S[illegible]

and Epicures humor, who cry out, *What meaneth this man? He seemeth to be the setter forth of some strange God.* But I say unto you, I am not the setter forth of any strange God, but it is Jesus of *Nazareth* whom I preach unto you. Alace, some of you thinketh this great salvation to be some morning dream, or some golden fancy: but I say unto you, it is neither a dream nor fancy; but a real truth that we preach unto you.

IV. The fourth bar that keepeth persons from imbracing of this great salvation, is the bar of *discouragement*: This strong bar keepeth many so fast, that they cannot imbrace this great salvation though it be freely offered unto them. I shall say no more to you, who are such, but counsel you to do as these four lepers did, 1 *King.* 7. 4. *Who sat at the gate of Samaria, who said, why sit we here till we die? if we say we will enter into the City, then the famine is in the City, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall into the host of the Syrians, if they save us alive, we shall live, and if they kill us, we shall but die.* Even so say I unto you, that if ye abide in the state of unbelief, ye shall surely be undone; therefore go forth, for ye know not but God may work a great salvation for you, and if ye will quite your unbelief, and close with Christ in the offer of this great salvation (by faith) ye shall have no more to do, *but eat and drink, and divide the spoil.*

V. The fifth bar which withholdeth persons from imbracing of this great Salvation, is the bar of unwillingness, *Ye will not come to me, that ye may have life.* And alace, that is an iron bar indeed, by which many that are in hell have barred themselves out of heaven. Alace shall ye be such wretches also. O what a dreadful sound is that, *wo unto thee,* O Jerusalem, *wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it once be?* Ah, *turn you, turn you, why will ye die?* Why will ye slight this great

great salvation? O will none of you this day imbrace it!

VI. The sixth bar that withholdeth persons from imbracing the great salvation, is the bar of *worldly mindedness*: many of you are so fixed to the world, that ye cannot come and close with this great salvation. I may allude to that word spoken of *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 10. 22. that he *hid himself amongst the stuff*, for many have buried, and nested themselves in the midst of the world, that they cannot imbrace this great Salvation.

VII. The seventh bar which keepeth many from imbracing this great Salvation, is the bar of *hard-heartedness*: there hath such a stupidity & hardness of heart seised upon many, that let Christ preach as he will to them (by his Word, or by other dispensations) they are no more moved, then if his Word and dispensations were a thousand miles from them. O that strong bar of hardness of heart, when shall the Omnipotent hand of God break it?

VIII. The eighth bar that hindreth many from imbracing this great salvation, is the bar of *slothfulness*. Many of you cannot be at the pains to imbrace it: but I say unto you, there is but small pains in the way of Godliness: I say unto you, it may so easily be had, that it is in your offer to day: and if ye will, ye may put forth your hand, and take it. Consider therefore what ye will do: O will ye despise it, I say, will ye still neglect and despise it? will ye but read that dreadful word, *Acts* 13. 40, 41. *Behold ye despisers, and wonder and perish.* Tell me freely, would ye have us to return this answer to him who sent us, that ye are despisers of the great salvation? Say to us, Are there none of you, who (for all this) will consent to partake of this great salvation? O captives and prisoners, and ye who are in the bonds of Satan, will ye come and partake of this great salvation, and you shall be made free. I have an act of release for you to

day;

day; if ye will come, and make uſe of it, ye ſhall be ſet at liberty. But, Oh, ſhall the priſon doors be caſt open, and yet none come forth? But (that I may come to a cloſe) I ſay unto you, O poor *priſoners, go forth, go forth*, and partake of this great ſalvation. Oh, will ye not come forth? What holdeth you in? The foundation of your priſon houſe is ſhaken to day, therefore if ye will but come forth, and caſt a look to Chriſt, your very ſhakles ſhall fall off your hands, and ye ſhall be as thoſe who were never bound. Now I leave this with you, and to make you think upon it, I ſhall ſpeak theſe five words unto you, and I intreat you think upon them.

I. Firſt, I have excellent tidings to tell you (I hope ſome of you will give ear to them) *viz.* There is a great Perſon come here to day, and that is the mighty Author of this great ſalvation, who hath brought everlaſting righteouſneſs with him, deſiring you to make uſe thereof; It is his deſire that ye would take his excellent Gift at his hand. Theſe, I ſay, are the tydings that I have to preach unto you; and *I* hope never to be declared a liar; for what I preach unto you, I ſay yet unto you, that Chriſt, the Author of the great ſalvation, deſireth to give it freely unto you, if ye will but take it. But O will ye not take it? I think, if ye did ſee an hundred men lying in priſon, or dungeon, without all light, bread, or water, and a great Prince coming to them, ſaying, I deſire to ſee you all to come forth, and partake of this great liberty which I bring unto you; and every one of them ſhould anſwer, *I ſcorn to come forth at this time*; would ye not think them exceeding great fools? And yet I fear, ſuch act of great folly fall out in many of your hands to day; that when Chriſt hath given us the keys of your priſon doors, and they are opened, ye will not come forth. But I muſt intreat you yet to come forth and ſave your ſelves; For who knoweth, but we may be com-

commanded to ſhut your priſon doors again, and to ſeal them with ſeven ſeals, with an unalterable decree from heaven, never to be recalled? Wherefore, O ye priſoners *go forth*, *go forth* from your priſon houſe.

2. Secondly, I would ſay this to you, that it is not without much ground that this Salvation (offered to you) is called a great ſalvation, I know a little Paper of two or three ſheets, might contain all the ſalvations that ever any man obtained; but the World would not be able to contain all the Books which might be written to the commendation of this great ſalvation; yea, (unto any who will imbrace it) I ſay firſt, If thou find not this ſalvation above thy faith, then go thy way when thou art come; But I know thou wilt find it both above thy faith and hope. Secondly, If thou find it not above thy deſires, when thou art come unto it; then go thy way again; but were thy deſires as the ſand upon the ſea ſhoar, thou ſhalt always find more in this ſalvation then ever thou could deſire. Thirdly, If this ſalvation be not above what thou can conceive, then go thy way when thou art come to it; But think of it as thou can, it ſhall always be above thy thoughts of it: Fourthly, If this ſalvation be not above thy opinion of it, then go thy way when thou art come unto it: but I know thou wilt find it far above thy opinion of it. Therefore ſeeing it is ſo great a Salvation, as that all the world could not contain all the Books might be written in the commendation of it, O will ye imbrace it, even to day, while it is in your offer.

3. Thirdly, I would ſay this unto you, be perſwaded, that there is no ſin that will more provoke the Maieſty of God to puniſh you, then the ſin of ſlighting the great ſalvation, *Bring forth theſe murtherers*, ſaith the Lord (of the ſlighters of this invitation) *and ſlay them before me.* I intreat you enquire at your own

ho-

hearts, what will ye anſwer when ye are reproved for ſlighting of it ? Old men, will ye ask at your own hearts, what ye will anſwer to Chriſt when he ſhall propoſe that queſtion to you, Why ſlighted ye the great Salvation ? Old women, what will ye anſwer, when he ſhall ſay to you, why ſlighted ye the great ſalvation? Young men, and young women, inquire at your own hearts what ye will anſwer when Chriſt ſhall ſay to you; why ſlighted ye the great ſalvation ? Can ye imagine any anſwer unto that queſtion ? O dreadful ſhall the wrath of God be, that ſhall be executed upon the ſlighters of this great ſalvation ?

4. Fourthly, I would ſay this unto you, that heaven is waiting to hear, what acceptation the offer of this great ſalvation doth get among you. Here is the great ſalvation, here is the offer of it, and here is the commendation of it; what ſay ye to it ? is it not an excellent ſalvation? is it not a free ſalvation? is it not a great ſalvation? is it not an eternal ſalvation? Why then do ye not welcome it ? can any of you ſay any thing to the diſcommendation of it: I know you cannot ? Yea I dare ſay, your own hearts are admiring it as moſt excellent; And therefore, O will ye accept it. Alace, ſhall there be none here who will be found accepters of this great ſalvation, ſo freely offered to day ?

5. Fifthly, I would ſay this to you, let all the Angels praiſe him who is the Author of this great ſalvation. All the Saints round about the Throne praiſe him who is the Author of this great ſalvation. All ſe who are expectants of heaven praiſe him who is Author of this great ſalvation : All ye to whom offer is made, praiſe him who is the Author of great ſalvation. O heaven praiſe him, who is the hor of this great ſalvation. O all ye fowls of the praiſe him, who is the Author of this great ſal-. *O fire, hail, ſnow, vapors, ſtormy winds* and *tem-*

tempeſts, praiſe him who is the Author of this great ſalvation. All the Tribes of the Earth, praiſe him who is the Author of this great ſalvation. Our own ſoul praiſe him, who is the Author of this great ſalvation, and all that is within us bleſs him, who is the Author of this great ſalvation? O who would not praiſe him, who is the Author of this great ſalvation? Are there any here that will refuſe to commend him ? O think upon him, and let not this be a day of ſlighting him? Now where are your hearts at this time ? I will tell you where many of your hearts are, they are thinking upon the world : but I am ſure there are not many of them thinking upon this great ſalvation. Now what reſolution mind ye to go away with to day? Oh, have ye no reſolution beyond what ye had when ye came hither to day ? Are there any here who have this reſolution, *To whom ſhall we go, but to him who is the Author of this great Salvation, who alone hath the words of eternal life?* Even the Lord breath it upon you. Or is this your reſolution, that through Chriſt ſtrength (*forſake him who will*) *ye will never forſake him?* Or, have ye this reſolution, That *ye will eſteem more highly of the* Great Salvation *then ever ye did?* O that *the Lord may keep theſe in the imaginations of the thoughts of your heart for ever.* But as for you who have no reſolutions to imbrace this great Great Salvation, O wherewith ſhall I commend it unto you ? Do not your own neceſſities commend it? But if nothing can perſwade you to come away and imbrace it, then this place ſhall be a heap of witneſſes againſt you : *For hath heard all the words of the Law which he hath ſpoken unto you*, Joſh. 24.

Oh, caſt your eyes upon theſe pillars of the house and ſtones in the walls : I take them as ſo many witneſſes, that they may ſpeak, and teſtifie againſt you the great day of the Lord, if ye neglect this ſalvation to day. Therefore as ye go away, be

ing upon it, and whether or not ye mind to imbrace it, now while you may have it: This day I have ſet life and death before you: I have ſet before you both the great ſalvation, and the great damnation; And O that ye had underſtanding in all theſe things; that ye being wiſe, might be provoked at laſt to imbrace this great ſalvation, the which we do yet again intreat you to think upon. Is not heaven looking upon you at this time, to ſee what ye will do with this great offer of Salvation which I have this day (from the Lord) preſented unto you? Now, to Him, that can perſwade you to imbrace this great ſalvation, this Goſpel Redemption, this bleſſed myſtery into which the Angels deſire to pry, to him, *who can bring you back from the pit: and can enlighten you with the light of the living*; To him who hath the keyes of your priſon, *Who can open and none can ſhut, and can ſhut and none can open*; To Him, *Who hath all power in Heaven and in Earth communicate to Him, who can deliver you from the power of the grave, and can ſet you free from all your enemies*, We deſire to give praiſe, Amen.

SERMON II.

Heb. 2. 3. *How ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great Salvation, which at the firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.*

THere are two great and moſt ordinary complaints in theſe days; 1. There are many who complain, that their Eſtates and Perſons are in bondage, and that they are ſold ſlaves to the hands of ſtrangers: But, O that we ld alſo turn over the complaint to this, that our are in bondage, and that we are yet in *the gall of* ſs, *and in the bond of iniquity*, that ſo we might

might be provoked to long for the great ſalvation that is in your offer. 2. There are many complaining (and not without much cauſe) that there is now ſuch a toleration of Errours: But, O wilt thou complain alſo of this, that within thy heart there is a toleration of luſts; is there not an act of toleration concluded within thy breaſt, that the devil and all his company may reign in thee at pleaſure: Oh have ye not need of the great ſalvation? Shall I tell you, that Chriſt is courting you to imbrace it, and that he putteth on all his moſt glorious robes, and manifeſteth himſelf unto you, as a ſuitor making offer of himſelf, and of his great ſalvation. O tell me, have ye ſeen him? or do ye think to ſee him this day? What Robes had he on? There are five glorious Robes wherewith he cloaths himſelf, when he condeſcendeth to manifeſt himſelf to his people. Firſt, He cometh to his own with the *garments of ſalvation*, according to that word, Zech. 9. verſ. 9. *Rejoyce, O daughter of Sion greatly, ſhout O daughter of Jeruſalem*; for *behold, thy King cometh unto thee, he is juſt and having Salvation*; ay, your King is come here to day, and will you not fall in love with him when he is cloathed with the Garments of Salvation: Can ye ever have a more conquering ſight of Chriſt, then when he is cloathed with ſuch an excellent Robe, and offering you ſalvation. Secondly, he appeareth to his own ſometimes *in a garment dyed in bloud*, according to that word, *Iſai.* 6. verſe 1, 23. *Who is this that cometh up from Edom, with dyed garments in bloud as one that treadeth the wine fat*? And now I ſay to thee that will not look to Chriſt when he appears in the garments of ſalvation, have ye a heart to refuſe him, that hath fought ſuch a combat for you, who *hath trode the wine preſs alone*, and hath ſtained all his garments with the bloud of his enemies; or is there any here who dare refuſe this Salvation, who

they *see how he treadeth his enemies in anger, and trampleth them in his fury*, and thus *sprinkleth their bloud upon his garments.* O tremble at this sight, and seek quarters from him in time, or he shall dy his garments with the bloud of thy immortal soul. Thirdly, Christ appeareth unto his own, being cloathed with these humble Robes of condescendency, when he came in *the similitude of sinful flesh.* O what a sight was that, to behold the Prince of Heaven cloathed with our *nature*? What a sight was that to behold him, that was *cloathed with light, as with a garment*, to be cloathed with *our infirmities*? yet he condescended to cloath himself thus, that we might have access unto Him, and be partakers of His gifts: O, can we refuse Him, when love hath thus pressed him to put on the begger weed, that *he might say to worms, ye are my brethren, and my sisters.* Fourthly, Christ sometimes manifesteth Himself, being cloathed with the garments of beauty, and ravishing Majesty, such was the sight that the Spouse got of Christ, *Cant.* 2. 8. *As the aple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved amongst the sons*; And *Song* 5. When she saw him, *white and ruddie, and the standard bearer of ten thousand*, and such was that joyful sight of him, when his garments were as the Light, *and white as the snow*, which he had at the Transfiguration, when these glorified ones did come (as it were) Ambassadors from that higher house to make him a visit. And Fifthly, Christ he sometimes appeareth to his own, in Robes of dreadful Majesty, and terrible highness and loftiness, when the soul upon the first sight of him remains dead, and there remains no more life in them; such was the sight *Daniel* got, in his 10. Chapter, and such was the sight that *John* got of Christ, *Rev.* 1. *ver.* 17. And I would ask at all that are here, what a sight have ye gotten of Christ to day, in which of all these robes have ye seen Him in: It is true, we

we are not now to look for the extraordinary sights of Him; But yet if ever thou hast seen him in any of his wooing Robs, sure he hath appeared matchless, and how shall ye then refuse him?

But now to come to the words, I was speaking unto you of; The first thing in the words, to wit, That there are many who live under the offer of this great salvation, that do slight it, and do not imbrace it; And now I shall only add a few things, further unto you. 1. Let me propose a few Considerations to perswade you to imbrace this great salvation; God forbid we go away before we imbrace this Gospel salvation: And therefore, I charge you in his Name, go not away before ye imbrace it. And to press it home upon you, there are these eight or nine properties of this great salvation, that is offered unto you this day.

And first, it is a *free salvation*, ye have no more a do, but to put forth your hand and take it: O come and take it: Christ hath foughten for this salvation, and there is no more required of you, but to come and reap the fruits of his victory; *who ever will, let him come*, there is nothing that should move you to stay away, *O captives, bond slaves to Satan, O prisoners of hope*, will ye come and partake of the great salvation, what holds you from coming away and partaking of it? It is freely offered unto you; ay, believe it, Christ requires no more of you, but that ye should come and take it out of his hand; *If ye consent to obey*, the bargain is ended; *Ye shall eat the good of the land*, Isai. 1.

Secondly, This great salvation is a compleat salvation, that is offered unto you to day, this is clear, *Luke* 1. *vers.* 71. *That we might be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us*, there is not any enemy that is in thy way, but if thou wilt come and partake of the great salvation, thou may have vi-

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ctory over it, ſo compleat a ſalvation it is, that is in your offer this day ; O ſhall we paſs away, and not imbrace it: O ſhall your curſed hearts undervalue this compleat Salvation that is come to your door? believe it, *Salvation is near unto you*, if ye will take it.

Thirdly, it is a *wonderful ſalvation*, it is ſuch a ſalvation as the Angels deſireth to pry into it, and it is ſuch a ſalvation , that all the Prophets deſire to pry into it ; It is almoſt ſix thouſand years ſince all the Angels in heaven fell into a Sea of wonder at this great ſalvation ; It is almoſt ſix thouſand years ſince *Abel* fell into a Sea of wonder at this great ſalvation: And what think ye is his exerciſe this day? He is even wondering at this great ſalvation; Would ye ask at all the Angels in heaven, would they not all ſay , O imbrace the great ſalvation ; Would ye ask at all the Saints that are above , would they not adviſe you to imbrace the great ſalvation ; Would ye ask at *Adam*, would he not ſay , *O imbrace this great Salvation*; Would ye ask at *Abel*, would he not ſay , *O imbrace this great ſalvation* ; And would not all the Patriarchs ſay unto you, *O imbrace the great Salvation*; And do not all that have taſted of the ſweetneſs of it, cry out unto you , *Come and imbrace the great Salvation*.

The fourth property of this ſalvation is, that it was bought at an exceeding dear rate, it is a dear ſalvation. Would ye know the difference between Chriſts coming to this ſalvation, and your coming to it, it is this, Chriſt was forced to travel through all the armies of the Juſtice of God; He was forced to drink of the cup of the wrath of God , before he could come to purchaſe this great ſalvation ; and now what is required of you to obtain this, we may ſay no more but put out your hands and take it; will ye look to the price that was laid down for this Salvation; there is not a wound in

in the body of Chriſt, but it ſaith, *This is a dear Salvation*; There is not a reproach Chriſt met with, but it ſaith, *O is not this a dear Salvation*: There is not a buffeting Chriſt met with, but it ſaith, *O is not this a dear Salvation*: There is not a neceſſity that he is put into, but it ſaith, *Is not this a great and dear Salvation*? O Sirs! will ye not come and take this great ſalvation, this dear ſalvation, What muſt I give for it ſay ye? I ſay, ye muſt give nothing for it, come & take it *without money, and without price*; it was dear to Chriſt, but it ſhall be cheap unto you. O! is it not cheap to you ? I aſſure you , if you will come to the market to buy the great ſalvation, there is none of you that needeth to ſtand for the price of it. O come and take it, and have it, and there ſhall be no more prigging.

Fifthly, It is an everlaſting ſalvation, that ye ſhall enjoy the fruits of throughout eternity, as is clear, *Heb. 9. 13. He became the Author of eternal redemption unto us.* It is a ſalvation that the devil can never be able to take out of your hand, if ye take it, ye ſhall never be robbed of it again. O come and partake of this great ſalvation , whereby the gates of hell ſhall never prevail againſt you.

Sixthly, It is a noble and honourable ſalvation, it is not to be taken out of one ſlavery to another, but it is to be taken *out of priſon, that we may reign*, Luk. 1. ver. 71. compared with *ver.* 74. it is, *That we being ſaved, may ſerve him without fear in holineſs and righteouſneſs all the days of our life.* I ſay, Come, come, and partake of this great ſalvation, that your glory may be increaſed, and that ye may be exalted above the Kings of the Earth.

Seventhly , It is a moſt advantagious ſalvation. What are the advantages of any ſalvation that are not to be found in this? is there no peace to be found

through this salvation? Is there not liberty to be found through this salvation? Is there not eternal enjoyment of God to be found through this salvation ? yea all salvations are in this one salvation.

Lastly, It is a royal salvation , for it cometh to us from, and through the Son of God : Christ is the Author of it, and we conceive, Christ may be said to be the Author of this salvation, in these respects; 1. He is the meritorious cause that did procure it , it was the price of his bloud that was laid down for it to purchase this great salvation. 2. He is the fountain from whence it floweth , according to that word which we have cited, *Heb.* 5. 9. *He became the Author of eternal salvation.* 3. He is the person that fitteth our spirits for partaking of it, and it is he that removeth mountains out of the way, that we may have fair access unto the great salvation. 4. It is he that must perswade our hearts to imbrace and take hold of it. He standeth without and cryeth in to the heart to imbrace this great salvation ; And he standeth within, making the heart cry out *Content* , I will imbrace the great salvation ; He is indeed the person that commendeth ; and doth point forth this great salvation unto us. He is the noble Minister of it, it began first to be preached by him.

Now, Is there any of you that hath fallen in love with this great salvation; that ye may try your selves I shall give you some evidences of the persons that are near unto this great salvation. Is thy *estimation* of the great salvation increased be what it was in the morning when thou came hither ; Is thy estimation of the great Gospel Salvation a foot higher then it was in the morning? I say unto thee, thou art not far from the great salvation, Come away. 2. Is thy desire after great salvation increased be what it was in the morning ? Hath thou stronger desires after the great sal-

vation, then before thou came hither, that is an evidence thou art not far from it. 3. *Is thy thoughts of thy necessity* of the great salvation greater then they were? Thinketh thou that thou hast more need of the great salvation then ever thou thoughtest before ? And is thy opinion and thoughts of saving thy self less , then they were before thou camest hither? Art thou forced to cry out, *none but Christ* can save me? I say thou art not far from the great salvation; Wilt thou come away. O that ye would once seal this conclusion with much heart perswasion, *I am undone without Christ, I am undone without Christ* , who is the Author of this great salvation. Are there any of you that are sensible that ye are in the fetters of sin , and in the bonds of iniquity? Are ye brought to the conviction of this, that ye are yet in the gall of bitterness? I say, if thou be brought to this length , to be sensible of thy bonds, and art crying out, *O Redeemer, haste and come away*; I say , If thou be sensible of thy bonds and imprisonment, and crying out , *O thou that was anointed from eternity, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound* , O haste, and come away and redeem me , *even poor me* , sinking, sinning, perishing, self-destroying *me*, thou art not far from the great salvation. 4. Art thou a person who beginneth to weep, because thou hast been so long a stranger to Christ, and the great salvation; Old men, that are here, how long have ye been strangers to the great salvation and to the Author of it ? Now will ye shed one tear for your estrangements, and cry out Wo is me that Christ and I have been so long asunder ; I say, if thou hast come that length, thou art not far from the great salvation, *Come away* ; O pity your selves, make haste, make haste, and *come away*.

But now in the third place, let me give you s

evidences by which ye may know more clearly, whither or no, ye have imbraced *this Great Salvation*, that ye may know your ſelves, and that ye walk not down to your grave with a lie in your right hand. The firſt evidence of a perſon that hath imbraced the great ſalvation, is, that he will have a high eſteem of the Saviour and Author of the great ſalvation; Haſt thou a matchleſs eſteem of matchleſs Chriſt, the Saviour of the world? that is a ſpeaking evidence unto thee, thou art a partaker of the great ſalvation; Art thou come this length, that thou cryeth out, *none but Chriſt, none but Chriſt*, It is a ſpeaking evidence, that thou art come to be a partaker of the great ſalvation, when thou can cry out that word, *Exod.* 15. 1. *The Lord is my ſtrength and my ſong, he alone is become my ſalvation*; if Chriſt hath become thy ſalvation, then it is like he hath become thy ſong. I would ask this at you, Were ye ever brought this length, that you durſt not adventure to praiſe Chriſt your alone, but was forced to call in all the creatures, and ſay, *O magnifie the Lord with me?* O that is an evidence that ye have imbraced this ſalvation.

Secondly, Theſe who have imbraced the great ſalvation, will ſtudy to maintain and keep their grips of it: they will ſtudy to hold faſt ſo precious a Jewel, this is preſt, *Gal.* 5. 1. *Stand faſt in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free*: yea, they will ſtudy to walk ſuitable to this noble mercy, at leaſt, they will ſtrive and endeavour to do it, as is alſo preſſ'd, in that [illegible]e verſ. I ſay if thou haſt been made a partaker of [illegible] Goſpel Salvation, thou wilt ſtrive to keep thy ſelf [illegible]n the power of theſe things that once triumphed [illegible]r thee.

[illegible]Thirdly, A perſon that is a partaker of the great [illegible]tion, will have a high eſteem of this mercy and [illegible]ion, ſo *Paul*, when he ſpeaketh of it here, he cannot

not but put ſome note of excellency to it, calling it the *Great Salvation*; Therefore I ſay, if thou haſt imbraced the great ſalvation, thou wilt have ſo high eſteem of it, that not to be ſo ſubjected to it as thou ſhould, or to be in ſubjection to the power of thy luſt in any meaſure, will be his burden and affliction. The man will be ſorry when he is brought forth from the houſe of his bondage, unto the red ſea; he will be ſorry, that when he ſhould have ſongs of triumph over his idols put in his mouth, that they ſhould ſing ſongs of triumph over him.

Fourthly, A perſon that hath imbraced the great ſalvation, he will be longing ſometimes for the day when this ſalvation ſhall be compleat, when he ſhall ſing that ſong, with that *numerous multitude which cannot be numbred*, Rev. 7. 9. O what a day ſhall it be, when thou ſhalt begin to ſing that ſong: After this (ſaith he) *I beheld and lo, a great multitude of all people which no man could number, of all people, nations and languages, ſtood before the throne, and before the Lamb, cloathed with white robes and palms in their hands, and they cryed*: And how cryed they? *They cryed with a loud voice.* They would not mutter the ſong, nor ſing ſilently, but cryed *with a loud voice*. And what did they cry? They cryed with a loud voice, *Salvation unto our God, who ſitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb.* I would only ask at you that are partakers of the great ſalvation, what ſongs ſhall be put into thy mouth, when the waters of *Jordan* ſhall divide themſelves, *That the ranſomed of the Lord muſt paſs thorow*? When thou ſhalt ſing that ſong, *Pſ.* 115. 1. *Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thee belongs the glory of our ſalvation*: O what a day ſhall that be, when that excellent ſong ſhall be put in thy mouth? yea, what a day ſhall it be, when thou ſhall be cloathed with theſe excellent garments that

made mention of, *Isai. 6. vers.* 10. for he hath cloathed thee with the garments *of salvation*, and he hath covered thee with the *rob of righteousness* : O what robes are these ? Did ye ever see such excellent robes as these must be ? I think we will misken our selves. O do ye not think we will misken our selves , when we shall put on these excellent robes ? Now therefore is the bargain closed : Or will ye go away before ye take this great salvation ? Dare ye go out at these doors, and neglect the great salvation ? I would ask this at you , Think ye it will not be most sad, that Christ should tell this in heaven of you to night , I was preached to a pack of stones, that none of them would love me : Will ye not be feared that this report shall be carried back to heaven of you? For what report can Christ carry back but this ? Now is the cord of this great salvation let down unto you , is there none of you that will take a grip of it? O will ye flighter after it ! Will ye make this a rejoycing day in heaven, that is a fasting day unto you, and the way to make it so, is to Imbrace the great salvation. Now what say ye to it old men, let me speak to you, and ask your thoughts of the great salvation , gray hairs should be a Crown of Glory , if they be found in the way of righteousness, old men speak your minds, that young men may not have your bad example ; What say ye of this salvation ? Is it not a most glorious salvation , is it not a most excellent salvation that is in your offer ; I intreat you speak your minds , tell Christ ye are content to take the great salvation ; otherwise , who ever he be that will not partake of the Gospel salvation, I, in the Name and Authority of Christ our Master , denounce eternal and irreconcilable war against him ; put on your harness, ye shall not boast when you put it off again , the wrath and fury of God shal come upon thee to the uttermost

if

if ye imbrace not this great salvation. Other wars are but for a time ; the greatest captains that ever the earth did carry, are now *laid down in the sides of the pit, and their swords broken under their heads*, Armies of ten hundred thousand , a hundred years time have laid them all in their graves, and ended all their contests, but there is no discharge of this war that shal be concluded betwixt Christ and you, it shall become an eternal and most terrible War, which shall be but beginning when time is ended ; Now Peace or War, which of them will ye choise? Dare ye send a charge to Christ, and say ye will defy him ? I am afraid there shal be two things that many of us shall report to day, First, I am afraid there will be many that will give *Pharaohs* report to the offer of the great salvation, and say, *Who is the Lord that I should obey him* ? I tell you who he is , He is *glorious in holiness, fearful in praises doing wonders*. O imbrace him before he go hence, and give not *Pharaohs* report, lest ye be drowned in the sea of His wrath , whence there shall be no recovery.

Secondly, I fear there will be many here to day, that will give *Demas* report to this precious offer ; I will go and forsake Christ, & imbrace this present world; O bad exchange; cursed be he that shall make it, wil ye be of *Demas* humor ? I fear there hath been many of that humor of a long time ; but I intreat you once be wise, before you die. I confess that proverb, old fools, are twice fools; I think old men that will not imbrace this great salvation, I think ye are triple fools; What wait ye for, is there any thing can afford you any satisfaction but this great salvation ? Now are ye convinced old men , that Christ is waiting for your answer : I intreat you before ye go hence, speak your minds, what ye think of the great salvation; is it not a lovely salvation, is it not lovely now ? What say ye

to it? I am to go away,and the offer is to be taken up at this time,and it is hard to ſay,if ever ye ſhall have an offer again. I would only ſay this to you, and be ſure of it, though I ſhould never be a partaker of this great ſalvation , yet I ſhall be a witneſs againſt you that are not partakers of it:I tell and declare unto you I ſhall be a witneſs againſt you if ye imbrace not this great ſalvation. Now, old men,are ye perſwaded to imbrace it? Let me obteſt you *by the beauty of Chriſt*, come and partake of the great ſalvation , ye that are travelling upon the borders of eternity. Now if ye will give no more, give this , will ye go home and think upon it. I ſhall not be uncharitable, nor enter to judge your thoughts;I fear there ſhall be many declared and found guilty among us,that we have declared unto heaven we will not imbrace the great ſalvation, but have trod the blood of the *Son of God under foot*. Now I intreat you, every one of you, ask at your ſelves if ye be the perſons that will *preſume in your hearts to do ſo*. Now I ſhall leave it with you, let it not be a witneſs againſt you:I ſhall leave it with this: O come away, Old men, Young men, Old women, and Maids , come and imbrace this precious Goſpel Salvation. Ye may ſay, Ye bid us come, but we cannot come. I deſire no more of you but to come with this, Lord I am content to come, but I cannot come, Come once to that: for if once ye be content to receive it,it will not be long before ye be able to receive it. Now ſhall Chriſt depart, and will none of you ſay, we are content to take him? Will ye charge your own conſciences with this : Am I content to take Chriſt and the great ſalvation ? O bleſt, bleſt, bleſt be He that is the Author of this great ſalvation:and bleſt be he that gets any of the ends of the cord of the great ſalvation, that we ſink not under the wrath and fury of the Lord. Come and imbrace this great ſalvation:

on: and again I ſay, come and imbrace it; for what can ye have if ye want it?and what can ye want if ye have it?I ſhall ſay no more,but cloſe with that word, *Iſ.* 62. 2. *Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed to the ends of the world, to thoſe that are far off*; what hath he proclaimed? *Say ye to the daughter of Sion, Behold thy ſalvation cometh , behold it cometh.* I ſay to you that are the ends of the world, ſalvation is brought near unto you: *ſtout hearted and far from righteouſneſs*,the great ſalvation is brought near unto you, and will you ſend it away ? O conſider what ye are doing: And to Him that can perſwade you to imbrace this great ſalvation, we deſire to give praiſe.

A SERMON Concerning DEATH.

Pſa. 89. 48. *What man (is he that) liveth and ſhall not ſee death,&c.*

IT is very hard to determine,where all that are here ſhall be within thirty years;for even ere that time come,many (if not all) of us who are here ſhall have taken up our eternal lodging. And whether we ſhall take it up in the eternity of joy , or the eternity of pain , is alſo hard to determine . only this one thing I am ſure of , that all of us ſhall ſhortly be gone ; *And ere long the ſhadows of death ſhall be ſitting upon our eye lids, and our eye-ſtrings ſhall begin to break.* Therefore I would the more ſeriouſly inquire at you, what would you think if death were approaching this night unto you? Think ye that Jeſus Chriſt is gone up to prepare a place for you ? even for you ? Surely I think we are all near to eternity, and there are ſome hearing me to day, whom I dare the whole world to aſſure,that ever they ſhall have

nother Sermon: Therefore I intreat you all to hear this preaching as if it were the laſt preaching that ever ye ſhould hear; and O that we could ſpeak it, as if it were the laſt Sermon that ever we would preach unto you. Believe me, death is another thing then we take it to be; *Oh, what will many of us do in the day of our viſitation, when deſolation ſhall come from afar? Where will we flee for reſt: and where will we leave our glory?* Old rich men, where will ye flee when death aſſaults you? Old poor men, where will ye flee when death aſſaults you? Old women, where will ye flee when death aſſaults you? Young women, where will ye flee when death aſſaults you? It was an ancient obſervation of *David*, Pſal. 39. 5. that *God had made his days as an hand breadth*; which either may relate to the four-fold eſtate of man, *viz.* his *infancy*, his *childhood*, his *man-hood*, and his *old age*. Or it may relate to the four-fold time of his life, *viz.* his morning, his forenoone, his afternoon, and his evening, yet all our lifetime is but a day. And O think ye not that our day is near unto a cloſe?

Now before that I begin to ſpeak any thing from the words, I ſhall ſpeak a few things to theſe two queſtions; which I conceive, may not altogether be unprofitable.

Queſt. 1. Whether is it lawful for any to deſire to die, and to return unto their long and endleſs home? Whether it be lawful for one to cry out, O *time, time flee away* (*and all my ſhadows let them be gone*) that ſo long eternity may come?

Anſw. I ſay, it is lawful in ſome caſes for one to deſire to die: for it was *Pauls* deſire, *Phil.* 1. 23. *I am in a ſtrait betwixt two, having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better.* And 2 *Cor.* 5. 2. *We groan earneſtly deſiring to be cloathed with our houſe which is from Heaven.* I long greatly till

till the twentieth one year of my age come, when my minority ſhall be overpaſt, that I may be entered heir to that matchleſs inheritance. But to clear in what caſes it is lawful to deſire to die.

1. I ſay, it is lawful to deſire to die, when it floweth from a deſire of uninterrupted fellowſhip and communion with Chriſt, and conjunction with him: this is clear, 2 *Cor.* 5. 6. *Knowing that while we are preſent in the body, we are abſent from the Lord.* Therefore, verſ. 8. *We are willing rather to be abſent from the body, and to be preſent with the Lord.* Alſo it is clear, Phil. 1. 23. *I am in a ſtrait between two, having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt which is far better.* It was his great end to have near and unmixed communion with Chriſt. What aileth you *Paul* (might one have ſaid) may ye not be content to ſtay a while here? Nay ſaith *Paul*, *I deſire to be gone, and to be with Chriſt.* Waſt thou never with him here, *Paul*? I have been with him, ſaith he; but what is all my being with him here, in compariſon of my being with him above, *While I am preſent in the body, I am but abſent from the Lord*; Therefore I will never be at reſt, ſaith he, get what I will, until I get Chriſt, until I get thoſe naked and immediate embracements of that noble plant of renown, the flower of the ſtock of *Jeſſe*, who is the light of the higher houſe, the eternal admiration of Angels.

2. It is lawful to deſire to die when it floweth from the excellencies of Heaven, and from a deſire to partake of thoſe excellent things that are there, this is clear, 2 *Cor.* 5. 4. *We groan, being burthened*; or as the word is, *We groan as they who are preſſed under a burden, that we may be cloathed upon, &c.* What moveth you to groan ſo *Paul*? O ſaith he, I groan that *mortality may be ſwallowed up of life.*

3. It is lawful to deſire to die, when it flo[weth]

from a desire to be freed from the body of death; and from these tentations that assault us; and from these oppressions whereunto we are subject by it. Doubtless, *Paul* desired to die on this account, when he cryed out, *Rom.* 7. 24. *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!* He longeth greatly for the day, *wherein he should be made white like the wings of a Dove, covered with silver, whose feathers are of yellow gold.* O saith *Paul*, I am as one impatient till I be above, where I shall be cloathed with these excellent and cleanly robes, *The righteousness of Christ.* Oh, saith *Paul*, I think every day a year, till I be possessed of that Kingdom where Satan cannot tempt, and the creature cannot yield, and where I shall be free from all my fears of sinning. Now in all these respects, who would not desire to die? But to guard all these, I would give you these four Cautions.

1. *Caution.* Your desires to die should not be peremptory, but ye should desire to die with submission to the will of God, so that although he would fill up fifteen years more to your life, ye should be content to live it out.

2. *Caut.* When your desires are hasty, and off hand, suspect them; for some when they meet with an outward cross (without all deliberation) will cry out, *O to be gone, O that I were dead.* But your desire to die should be deliberate, but not hastily or rash.

3. *Caut.* It is not lawful to desire to die, because of personal affliction. Many, when they meet with great afflictions, will cry out, *O to be gone*; They long for death, even upon that account, such were Job's desires, *Job* 21. 22. and chap. 6. ver. 7, 8. *O that I might have my request, even that it would please God to destroy me.* This desire was very unlawful.

4. *Caut.* It is not lawful to desire to die, when thy

thy predominant idol is taken away from thee; yet such was *Jonahs* desire, *chap.* 4. 23. *Jonah* thought his credit and reputation (which was his idol) was gone, and could never be regained; therefore he wished to die. But I would say this to you, that some will have ten desires for death, when they have not one desire for heaven. And what moveth Christians to be so desirous to die? It is not so much because of their hope, as because of their anxiety; it is not so much because of their confidence, as because of their impatience. But I say unto you, when your desires of death are not accompanied with desires of heaven, suspect them. 2. I would say this, that there are some who will have ten desires for death, when they will not have one for the death of the body of death; But it were good for thee (who are such) to be desiring the death of the body of death, then should thou be in a more suitable frame to desire to die.

3. Some will have hearty desires to die, and yet when death cometh, they will be as unwilling to die as any. It hath been observed, that some who have much desired to die, when death came, have cryed out, *O spare a little, that I may recover strength*, &c. 4. There is a great difference between a desire to die, & death it self. It is an easie thing to desire to die, but it is a very great business to meet with death, and to look it in the face when it cometh. We think death (ere it come near to us) to be but childrens play, but when we meet with it, it maketh us change our thoughts; for it is a great business to die.

Quest. 2. Is it lawful for a Christian to desire to live, when he is summoned to die?

Answ. In some cases it is lawful for a Christian to desire to live, even when he is summoned to die; which is clear from the practice of *David*, Psal. 39. 13. where he prayeth, *That the Lord would spare him a little*

little. It is alſo clear from the practice of good *Hezekiah*, Iſ.38.3. when he was commanded *to ſet his houſe in order, for he ſhould die, and not live,* he cryeth forth, *Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart; and have done that which is good in thy ſight*, and Hezekiah *wept ſore*; Or as the word in the Original, *he wept with great weeping:* but to guard this, take theſe two *Cautions.*

Caution 1. Thy deſires to live (when thou art ſummoned to die) ſhould not be peremptory, but with ſubmiſſion to the will of God, that if it be his pleaſure to remove thee preſently out of time, thou ſhould be content to die.

Caution 2. Thy deſires to live ſhould have gracious principles, and alſo a very gracious end, as is moſt clear from *David*, Pſ. 39. 13. where he ſaith, *O ſpare a little, that I may recover my ſtrength, before I go from hence, and be no more:* his deſire to live was that he might have victory over his idols, as if he had ſaid, my deſire to live is, that I may have ſtrength to wreſtle with, and overcome my Idols; and without all controverſie, *Hezekiahs* deſire was a moſt precious and well grounded deſire: However, I would ſay this unto thee, that thou ſhouldeſt examine thy deſires to live, as much (if not more) as thy deſires to die; for we are ready to ſhun death if we could, but he is that univerſal King, unto whom all of us muſt be ſubject ere long.

Now in the words which are read unto you, there are theſe ſix things, which may be clearly obſerved from them.

I. First, That it is a moſt clear and infallible truth, that all perſons ſhall once ſee death, as is clear in theſe words, *who is he that liveth, and ſhall not ſee death?*

II. Secondly, That this truth (that we ſhall once ſee death) is not much believed or thought upon by ma-

many, therefore it is that the Pſalmiſt doubleth the Aſſertion, *who is he that liveth, and ſhall not ſee death? Shall he deliver his ſoul* (that is his life) *from the hand* (that is) *from the power of the grave.*

III. Thirdly, That ſometimes a Chriſtian may win to the ſolid Faith of this truth, that once he muſt die, this the Pſalmiſt wan unto, as it is alſo clear in that word (who) *who is he that liveth, and ſhall not ſee death?*

IV. Fourthly, That the certainty of this, that once we ſhall die, ſhould be ſtill keeped in our mind, therefore that note of attention, *Selah*, is put to it; as if he had ſaid, take heed, that there is none living that ſhall not die.

V. Fifthly, That howbeit ſome perſons put the evil day far away, as if they were not to ſee death, yet is the day coming when they ſhall ſee death, and death ſhall take them by the hand.

VI. Sixthly, we ſhall take notice of this from the context, that the Chriſtian who is much in minding the brevity of his life, will believe the certainty of his death: the Pſalmiſt was ſpeaking of the ſhortneſs of his life in the preceeding verſe, and in this verſe, he ſpeaketh of the certainty of death.

Now as for the firſt of theſe things obſerved, *viz.* That it is certain and moſt ſure, that we muſt all once die; I hope there are none of you here who will deny, although I confeſs ſome few of you believe, that yet ſaid the woman of *Tekoah*, 2 Sam. 14. *we muſt all die, and be like water ſpilt upon the ground that cannot be gathered up again. God doth not accept the perſon of any.* And *Job* 30. 32. *I know thou wilt bring me to death, and to the houſe appointed for all living.* And it is very clear, *Eccleſ.* 8. 8. *There is no man that hath power over the ſpirit to retain the ſpirit, neither hath he any power in the day of death, and there is no diſcharge in that war, neither ſhall wickedneſs*

deliver

deliver those that are given to it. It is also clear, *Heb.* 9. 17. *It is appointed unto all men once to die.* So it is most clear that we must die. I remember of one *Philip*, King of *Macedonia*, who had one substitute for this very end to cry at his chamber-door every morning, *Memento mori, memento mori, memento mori*: Remember thou art to die. And it is reported to have been the practice of the Nobles of *Greece*, and in the day wherein their Emperor was crowned, that they presented a *marble-stone* unto him, and he was enquired after what fashion he would have his Tomb-stone made? Which practice speaks forth this unto us, that although these were most destitute of the light of the Scriptures, they were very mindful of death. Believe me, death may surprise us before we be aware: for it is most certain that we must die; but there is nothing more uncertain then the way how, and the time when we shall die.

Death will surprise some, as it did *Abel*, in the open field, *Gen.* 4. 8. Death will surprise some as it did *Eglon*, in his parlour, *Judges* 3. 21. And death will surprise some, as it did *Saul* and *Jonathan*, in the flight, 1 *Sam.* 31.

Now in speaking to this point, I shall first speak a little to these advantages which attend those that live within continual sight of death. Secondly, I shall give you some considerations to press you to prepare for death. Thirdly, I shall give you some directions to help you to prepare for death: And then we shall proceed unto the second point of doctrine which we observed from the Text, & shall speak a few things from it unto you, and so come unto a close for this time.

First then, we conceive there are these seven advantages which attend those who live within the continual sight of this truth, that they must die.

I. First, The Faith of approaching death will make a

a soul exceeding diligent in duty: this was our blessed Lords Divinity, *Joh.* 9. 4. *I must work the work of him that sent me, while it is day: The night cometh, when no man can work*; That is, death is approaching, therefore I must work. It is clear also, 2 *Pet.* 1. 12. compared with vers. 14. In the 12. vers. *Peter* is exceeding diligent in his duty, and the ground of his diligence is in the 14. vers. *Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle*, &c. Yet it is even the Epicures argument, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we shall die*; and should not the Christian much more cry out, *Let me watch and pray, for to morrow I may die?* I say, if the Epicures did make use of this notion, to make them vigorous in the pursuit of their pleasures: O how much more should a Christian improve it, for making him vigorous in the pursuit of his duty? Therefore I say unto you all, O be diligent, for your night is drawing near. O Christians, and expectants of Heaven, are ye not afraid left ye be nighted before ye have walked the half of your journey? For if ye be nighted on your journey to heaven, before ye come to the end of your race, there is no retiring place whereunto ye may turn aside to lodge: therefore, *O work, work, work, while it is day*, for behold death is approaching, & then shal we all be called to an account

II. The Faith of approaching death, will make a Christian exceeding active in duty: he will not only be diligent, but also exceeding serious and zealous in the exercise of his duty: This is clear from that notable exhortation, *Eccl.* 9. 10. *whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might*: and the reason is, *For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whether thou goest.* Wherefore, O be active while ye are alive, for ye shall never work any more after ye are dead; and if ye live but one work undone, there is no doing of it after death, There is no work (saith *Solomon*) in the grave; therefore, O be active. III.

III. The faith of this truth, that we muſt all die, will help a Chriſtian to be exceeding mortified to the things of a preſent world. Oh, covetous men and women, would ye ſhake hands with cold death but once every morning, I ſhould defy you to purſue the world ſo much as ye do. *Paul* was much in the meditation of his change, which made him, 2 *Cor.* 4. 18. to overlook theſe things that are temporary, *while we look not* (ſaith he) *to the things that are ſeen, which are temporal, but to the things which are not ſeen, which are eternal*, therefore, Chap. 5. 1. *Knowing that if our earthly houſe of this tabernacle were diſſolved, we have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens: Therefore in this we groan, earneſtly deſiring to be cloathed upon with our houſe which is from heaven.* What aileth you *Paul* (might one have ſaid) may ye not take a look of the world? no, ſaith he; *For I know that if this earthly houſe of this tabernacle were diſſolved, I have a houſe with God, not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens.* That is, I know that ere long, the pins of my tabernacle will be looſed, and it will fall down about my ears, therefore I muſt look for another dwelling houſe: And, 1 *Cor.* 7. 24. *The faſhions of this world paſſe away*, Therefore, ſaith he, ver. 32. *I would have you without carefulneſſe, caring how to pleaſe the Lord.* And, *Phil.* 4. 5. *Let your moderation be known to all men, the Lord is at hand.* As if he had ſaid, Death is approaching and at hand, therefore I intreat you be ſober: But I think many of us will be found like *Saul* hid among the ſtuff, that is, we will be lying amongſt the midſt of the pleaſures of this paſſing world; But I ſay unto thee who art ſuch an one, that death will break the ſtrings of thy harp, thy muſick will quickly ceaſe. O but death will make thee have a low eſteem of the world. O bleſſed is the perſon who hath theſe

theſe thoughts of the world all along his way, which he ſhall have of it at death! have not the moſt curſed wretches been forced to cry forth, *Oh, I would give ten thouſand worlds for Chriſt?* have not ſome perſon (who have had the Moon upon their head, and that have made their belly their god) been forced to cry forth at death; *O curſed perſon that I am, that ever made the world my god?* Alace that I contented my ſelf with the world. Therefore I ſay unto thee who art ſuch an one, Oſtay thy purſuit after the world, for death is approaching that will cauſe all thy worldly comforts evaniſh.

IV. When a Chriſtian believeth this Truth, that he muſt die, it wilbe an exceeding great reſtraint to keep him from ſinning, as is clear, *Job* 31. 13. compared with *v.* 14. where *Job* reckoning over many good deeds done by himſelf, ſaith, *what then ſhal I do when God riſeth up? and when he viſiteth what ſhall I anſwer him?* As if he had ſaid, Sirs, miſtake me not, I am not boaſting much of my ſelf, for I could not have done otherwiſe, elſe what ſhould I do when God riſeth up? how could I anſwer to God if I had done otherwiſe? I think it were a notable practice for each of you, to ſay, *O temptation; what will I anſwer to God, when he riſeth up, to reprove me, if I ſhould yield unto thee?* Likewiſe, *Eccl.* 11. 9. where *Solomon*, diſſwading young men to purſue after vanity, bringeth this as a reaſon, *Know thou, that for all theſe things, God wil bring thee to judgement*; Therefore, I ſay unto thee, who art often tempted to ſin, let death and reckoning with God be ſtill in thy ſight, & I defy thee then to imbrace half ſo many temptations as now thou doeſt. I intreat you to anſwer all your temptations with that word, *what ſhal I do when he riſeth up? And what ſhall I anſwer when he viſiteth me?*

V. When a Chriſtian liveth within the ſight of this Truth, that he ſhall once ſee death, it will make him ex-

exceeding patient under every croſs wherewith he meeteth : Such a Chriſtian will hardly meet with a croſs, but he will quiet himſelf with this, Death will put me beyond this croſs : this is but a cloud that will quickly paſs away. And for this cauſe did *David* ſo compoſedly put up that deſire, *Pſal.* 39.4. *Lord make me to know my end, and the meaſure of my days*: He was ſure that the knowledge of his end would put him in a ſober and patient frame.

VI. The ſixth advantage is this, The faith of approaching death, will teach the perſon that hath it, to ſtudy ſaving wiſdom ; This is clear, *Pſ.* 90. 12. Where *David* putteth up this requeſt, *So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wiſdom.* As if he had ſaid, I will never think my ſelf wiſe, till I know that bleſſed piece of Arithmetick, *How to number my days.* I would deſire every one of you all to think with your ſelf every morning when you ariſe, now I am a day nearer unto eternity then I was before : and at the end of every hour, now I am an hour nearer unto eternity then I was before ; I ſay, think often, yea always thus, I was never ſo near my death as I am now; For, oh! are we not all nearer to eternity to day, then we were yeſterday ?

VII. The ſeventh advantage, attending the faith of approaching Death, is this, That it will make a Chriſtian very careful in preparing for Death. It is impoſſible for one to believe really that death is approaching, & not to prepare for it. Say what ye will, if ye be not careful in preparing for death, ye have not the ſolid faith of this truth, that ye ſhall die. Believe me, it is not every one that thinketh he believeth this truth, that believeth it indeed. And O how dreadful is it for an unprepared man to meet with death ? He deſireth not to die, yea, he would give a world for his life: But die muſt he, whether he will or not: for death will not

not be requeſted, to ſpare a little when he cometh ; And therefore I ſay unto you all, *Set your houſe in order, for ye ſhall ſurely die*; Old men and women, *ſet your houſe in order, for ſurely ye muſt die*; Young men and women, *ſet your houſe in order, for to morrow ye may die, and be cut off in the flower of your age*, Think not that there be any who can ſell time: for I ſay, ye ſhall never get time ſold unto you. Alace, I fear the moſt part of perſons that dieth now, death findeth them at unawars; for indeed the perſons that die among us when we come to viſit them, we may give you a ſad account of them , for we think they are comprehended under theſe four ſorts,

1. Firſt, When we go to viſit ſome perſons on their death bed, they are like unto *Nabal*, *their heart is dying and ſinking (like unto a ſtone) within them*; they are no more affected with death, then if it were a fancy; alace, for the great ſtupidity that hath overtaken many; Therefore I intreat you delay not your repentance till death, leſt the Lord take away your wit, ſo that ye cannot then repent for your ſenſleſneſs and ſtupid frame of ſpirit.

2. A ſecond ſort we find in a preſumptuous frame, ſaying; They have had a good hope all their days, and they will not quite it now; they will go down to the grave with their hope in their right hand; or rather they will go down to the grave *with a lie in their right hand* ; they live in a preſumptuous frame, and they die in the ſame deluſion. For when we tell them that by all probability they are going down to hell, they anſwer, God forbid, I was all my time a very honeſt man, or woman: But I love not that confeſſion, for there are many ſuch honeſt men and women in hel this day.

3. The third ſort we find, having ſome convictions that they have been playing the fool all their days; but we can get them no further; I ſhall only ſay to ſuch,

so

to go down to the grave with convictions in their breaſt,not making uſe of Chriſt,is to go down to hell with a candle in their hand to let them ſee the way;& truly the greater part that die,die in this manner.

4. Fourthly, There are ſome whom we find in a ſelf-righteous frame , toſting upon the Covenant of Works and their own merits, & truſting by theſe to go to heaven;yet neglecting the offer of Chriſts righteouſneſs.But, alace,we find nor one of a thouſand in this frame,*I deſire to be diſſolved,&be withChriſt,that's beſt of all*; And ſcarce do we find any in ſuch a frame, *O wretched man that I am,who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death ?* Therefore I ſay unto you all who are here,O will ye mind death before it take hold on you. Oh mind your work now; for ye will find that death ſhall be work enough for it ſelf,though ye leave no work till then.

VIII.The eight advantage that attendeth the Chriſtian in believing this truth, that once he muſt die,is this, death will not be ſo terrible to him as it is unto many when it cometh.What(think ye) maketh death a *king of terrours?*What maketh many to ſhake like the leaf of a tree,when they are ſummoned to appear before Gods Tribunal ? It is even becauſe of this, they have not been thinking on death before it came, ſo as to prepare for it, and I fear many in this place may be feared for death,and that when it cometh to them; they will ſay unto death, as *Ahab* ſaid to *Elijah*, *Haſt thou found me,O mine enemy*?Surely,death will take you and bring you to the judgement ſeat of Chriſt;Therefore ſtudy by all means to think often upon it; and make ready for it; For (believe me) death is a very big word, for it will once make you ſtand with horrour in your ſouls,if your peace be not made up with God ; I know not a more dreadful diſpenſation then death and a guilty conſcience meeting together.

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The ſecond thing that I ſhall ſpeak unto from this firſt obſervation (viz. *This is a moſt certain and infallible truth,and all perſons ſhall once ſee death*)ſhall be to give you ſome conſiderations for preſſing you to prepare for death.

I. The firſt conſideration is this , *That to die well, and in the Lord*, is a moſt difficult work; therefore I intreat you to prepare for death.It is a difficult work to communicate aright , it is a difficult work to pray aright, and it is a difficult work to confer aright;But I muſt tell you,it is a more difficult work to die aright, then any of theſe. It is true, it is more difficult to communicate aright,then to pray aright,yet it is much more difficult to die aright, then to communicate aright.For it is a moſt difficult work to die in the Lord. Death will put the moſt accurateChriſtian that is here to a wonderful ſearch ; and therefore I will tell you nine things that death will try in thee. 1. Death will try both the reality and ſtrength of thy Faith, *It* may be eaſie for thee to keep up faith under many difficulties, but death ſhall put thy faith to the greateſt ſtreſs that ever it did meet with. Yea,know this, that the faith of the ſtrongeſt Believer may get (and ordinarily doth get)a ſet at death, the like whereof it never got before , therefore prepare for death. 2. Death will try thy Love to God,ſome perſons pretend much love to him, but death will propoſe this queſtion to ſuch a perſon , *Loveſt thou him more then theſe? Loveſt thou him more then thy Wife?more then thy houſe? more then thy friends?* But your unwillingneſs to dy giveth usmuch ground to fear that many have little love to Chriſt, but much to the world,and ſo dare not anſwer the queſtion , *Lord thou knoweſt I love thee.* 3. Death will try thine enjoyments, ſome of you may be ready to think thatye meet with many enjoyments, ſo that ye might reckon (as you think) to fourty en-

joyments and ſweet outlettings;but beware that death bring them not down to twenty. I have known ſome, who thought they had met fourty times with God, but when death came , it made them take down the count to the half; therefore ſeeing death will try the reality of thine enjoyments,O prepare for it. 4.Death will try thy patience. Thou may ſeem to have much patience now,but when death cometh (and thou art put to die) it will put thy patience to a great tryal, therefore prepare for it. 5. Death will try the reality of thy duties, yea even theſe duties wherein thou had moſt ſatisfaction,as thy communicating aright in ſuch a place,thou hopeſt that is ſure: thy reading the Scripture at ſuch a time aright , thou hopeſt that is ſure; thou prayed at ſuch a time aright, and hopeſt that is ſure; thou meditated in ſuch a place aright,and hopeſt that is ſure. But (believe me)death may make thee change thy thoughts;for there are ſome perſons who have communicated,and prayed,*&c.* as right as any in this generation, who(for all that)will not find ſix duties wherein they can find ſatisfaction at death; Therefore our need is great to prepare for it.6.Death will exceedingly try thy ſincerity when it cometh;An hypocrite may go all alongs his whole way undiſcovered,yet death may bring him to light, and make it appear what man he is. 7. Death will diſcover unto thee many hid and ſecret ſins , of which thou never had a thought before, yea, albeit thou thought theſe had been forgotten,death will let thee ſee them ſtanding between thee and the light of his countenance. 8. Death will accurately try thy Mortification; ſome think they have come a great length in mortification; but (believe me) death will try it, and put it to the touch-ſtone. 9. Death will try thy hope,whether it be real or not. I ſhall only ſay this,that all the other graces muſt low the ſails to Faith, and ſo it is, Faith muſt

muſt carry us thorow , being that laſt triumphing grace, which muſt fit the field for us , when all the other graces will faint and ly by. It is Faith that muſt enter us fairly within the borders of eternity ; It is Faith muſt gainſtand all the temptations of death, yea, all the other graces muſt (as it were) ſtand by, and ſee Faith ſtrike the laſt ſtroak in this war.

II. The ſecond conſideration to preſs you to mind death,is this, that ye are to die but once, O labour to do that well, which ye are to do but once , and the wrong doing of which can never be helped. If ye pray not aright, ye may get that mended ; if ye meditate not aright, ye may get that mended; and if ye communicate not aright,ye may get that alſo mended; but alace, if ye die not aright, there is no mending of that; Therefore, O prepare for death,that ye may die well , ſeeing ye are to die but once.

III. The third conſideration to preſs you to mind death,is this, That they are pronounced bleſſed who die in the Lord,*Rev.* 14.13. *Bleſſed are the dead,which die in the Lord.* O let that provoke you to prepare for death,that to you may die in the Lord,that is the only way to make you eternally happy. I confeſs it is a queſtion difficult to determine, whether it be more difficult to die well,or to live well; I ſhall not anſwer it,but rather deſire you to ſtudy both.

IV. The fourth conſideration to preſs you to prepare for death,is this, *viz.* That though thou put all thy work by thy hand before death , yet ſhalt thou find that death ſhall have work enough for it ſelf,yea, as much as thou ſhalt get done. It will then be much for thee to win to patience, it will be much for thee to win to the ſight of thy Juſtification:and it will then be much for thee to win to aſſurance.O then is it not needful for thee to put all thy work by thy hand before thy latter end come ! Wherefore I may ſay to

you as *Moſes* ſaid in his Song, *Deut.*32.29. *O that they were wiſe, that they underſtood this, that they would conſider their latter end*! O that ye had this piece of divine wiſdom! I pray you conſider that ſad word, *Lam.* 1. 19. *She remembreth not her laſt end*, and what of it? *therefore ſhe came down wonderfully*. So wil the downcoming of many in this generation be wonderful, who conſider not their laſt end.

V. The fifth conſideration for preſſing you to prepare for death, is this, *viz.* That their labour ſhal end, but their work ſhall not be forgotten, as is clear from that foreeited place, *Rev.* 11. 13, *They reſt from their labours, and their works follow them*; and is not that a glorious advantage?

VI. The ſixth conſideration to preſs you to prepare for death, is this, *viz.* That death may come upon you ere ye be aware; ye know not but death may ſurpriſe you this night before ye go home to your houſes; and therefore let that preſs you to ſtudy a conſtant preparation for death.

VII. The ſeventh conſideration to preſs you to prepare for death, is this, *viz.* that as death leaveth you, ſo will judgement find you; if death ſhall leave you ſtrangers to Chriſt, ye ſhall appear before him ſtrangers unto him, therefore I intreat you all to prepare for it. I think that noble practice of *Paul* exceeding worthy of imitation, 1 *Cor.*15.13. *I die daily*, which I think doth comprehend theſe three things; 1. That *Paul* had death always in his ſight. 2. It comprehendeth this, that he endeavoured to keep ſuch a frame as every moment he ſhould be ready to die, ſo that whenſoever death ſhould put the ſummonds in his hand, he ſhould be content to anſwer. 3. It comprehendeth this, that he laboured to lay aſide & remove all things out of the way, that might detain him from laying down his tabernacle. O ſaith *Paul*, I labour ſo to clear

clear my ſelf of all hinderances, as that when ever I ſhall be ſummoned to remove out of time, I may willingly lay down my life. Therefore I would ask you this queſtion, *viz.* When ſhall you make your laſt teſtament? I think it were ſuitable for us to be renewing our latter will every day, for in ſo doing, *Paul* made an excellent teſtament, the better of which none that died ſince, have made, 2 *Tim.*4.7,8. *I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith*; theſe are very ſweet articles: and then he addeth, *Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord the righteous Judge ſhall give me at that day*. And think ye not that very ſweet, that he would leave ſomething unto you in Chriſts Name, *viz. And that not for me only, but for all them that wait for his appearance* Now I come to the third thing propoſed, *viz.* to give ſome directions for helping you to prepare for death.

Direct. 1. I intreat you be much in preparation for death every day, for it is even a preparation for heaven, to be taking a ſight of your grave and latter end every day.

Direct 2. I intreat you be much in theſe duties, Firſt, in ſelf-examination; that your counts may be clear with God; for many a ragged count ſhall we have when death and we ſhall meet. Secondly, be much in the exerciſe of repentance, that ſo ye may have every fault and corruption in you mourned for, before death and you meet. Thirdly, be much in the exerciſe of Faith, *making your calling and election ſure?* Fourthly, Be much in the exerciſe of Mortification, and that will help you to keep a looſe grip, not only of the world, but alſo of your other Idols; and if ye be much in theſe, ye ſhall undoubtedly be prepared for death.

Direct. 3. Be much in minding the excellent things

of heaven. A Christian that would be prepared for death, would have all his thoughts and conversation there. I think it would be an excellent help (in preparation for death) to take a sight of the crown every day.

Direct. 4. *Labour always to keep a good conscience void of offence toward God and men* : I say labour to keep thy conscience clear, and that shall be a continual feast unto thee.

Direct. 5. Slight not thy known duty, do not crucifie any conviction, neither break any resolution: put these three together, and that will exceedingly help you to prepare for death: I say, see that ye adventure not to slight any known duty; see that ye adventure not to crucifie any conviction, and see that ye adventure not to break your resolutions.

Now we come to the second thing which we observed from the words, *viz.* That this truth, that we shall once see death, is not much believed by any of us. And to make this appear, we shall only give some Evidences unto you, to prove that we are not as yet prepared for death.

I. *Evidence*, Doth not the unspeakable stupidity that hath overtaken many, say, that we are not a people prepared for death? Alace, many of us would find our selves in a most stupid temper, if we were presently to die; for many of us are no more moved with the threatnings & terrors of God, then if they did not belong unto us; & this saith, we are not as yet prepared for death.

II. *Evidence*, That we are not prepared for death, is our pursuing so much after vain and passing delights of a present world. Many of us, *Rise up early, and go late to bed at night, and eateth the bread of sorrow all the day, & loadeth themselves with thick clay*; And I am sure, that such a person, (being night and day taken up with the world) is not prepared for death. I remember a word re-

recorded of such a wretched one, who was exceedingly rich, said he, I would give so many thousands of money, if death would give me but one day: yet he got it not. And O how suddenly will death surprise many of you as it did him?

III. *Evidence*, which speaketh forth our unpreparedness for death, is our impatience under every petty cross that we meet with; for the prepared Christian will be patient under very sharp crosses.

IV. *Evidence*, That we are not prepared, is our not endeavouring to live within sight of our interest in God. Oh if we were prepared for death, durst we live in so much uncertainty of our interest in God, and of our assurance of heaven.

V. *Evidence*, Some of us can let our idols ly in our breast six years without repentance, and will never study to mortify them, nor to repent for them; and surely such are not prepared for death.

Now I intreat you seriously to mind what hath been said; And that ye may the more seriously think upon it, I will tell you some material challenges that your consciences at death will present unto you, therefore take heed, that ye may know how ye will answer.

I. *Challenge*, Is the slighting of much precious time, and singing away the precious offers of grace. O what will ye answer to that challenge when death shall present it to you, Death will say (or rather thine own conscience at death) what ailed thee to sin so many hours without either praying, reading, or meditating? Now have ye any thing to answer when death shall present this challenge to you? I intreat you premeditate what ye will say: I intreat you, prevent death by presenting it first seriously to your selves.

2. *Challenge*, That death will present unto you, will be for the killing of many precious convictions which we have had. What will each of you answer at death, when

when your conſcience propoſeth this challenge unto you? Thou met with ſuch a challenge at ſuch a time, and went home and crucified it; when at another time, thou met with another challenge, and went home and crucified it; Theſe challenges will be laid home to thy door, therefore think on them.

3. *Challenge*, Death will challenge you for a formal hypocritical way of going about duties. I ſay your conſcience will then tell you that ye went to ſuch a communion with a ſelfiſh end; and at another time, ye prayed hypocritically and formally. And what will ye have to anſwer when ye meet with theſe challenges? I confeſs I know not what ye can anſwer to theſe, but I charge you, be thinking what ye will anſwer, for it may be that theſe convictions ſhal lay on your conſciences, that even this day ye have heard two ſearching Sermons, and did meet with ſome convictions, but made no good uſe of them; yea, and it may be ye did ſleep all the time. O what will ye anſwer, when it ſhall be ſaid to you, ye went to ſuch a Sermon, and ſleeped all the time: and ye went to ſuch a communion, but had no other end before your eyes, but to be ſeen of men: I intreat you conſider preſently what ye will anſwer to theſe.

4. *Challenge*, Will be for your breaking of many precious reſolutions. It will be ſaid to ſome of you, that at the communion in this place ye took on vows and did break them. I am ſure ye cannot queſtion the juſtice of this challenge; therefore ſee what ye will anſwer.

5. *Challenge*, Ye ſlighted many precious offers of the Goſpel. O men and women in this City, what will ye anſwer to this? I was often exhorted to take Chriſt, and yet would never take him. What will conſcience ſay to that, when death ſhall table it before you? I tell you what ye muſt then anſwer: O curſed I, that ever

I refuſed Chriſt in the Goſpel. And ye ſhall then be confounded, becauſe this is your ſin; Believe me, there was never an offer of this everlaſting Goſpel, and of Chriſt in it, made unto you, that ſhall not at death, (before or after) be brought to your remembrance. And, O how ſad and doleful will it be to you, when Chriſt ſhall open the Book wherein your ſins are written, and begin with the ſin of ſlighting the great ſalvation? Thus I invited you, when ye were twelve years old: but ye would not come, I invited you when you were thirty years old, and ye would not come. What will ye anſwer to this? Have ye any thing to ſay? Or muſt ye not ſtand ſpeechleſs before your Judge, when he ſhall put home this challenge unto you? Therefore think ſeriouſly upon it, how ye will anſwer to it.

6. *Challenge*, Will be for your ſinning oftentimes againſt light: And O how painful and ſad a challenge will that be at the day of death, when it will be ſaid, thou ſinnedſt with a witneſs in thy boſome, that thou waſt doing wrong: thy conſcience will ſay oftentimes did I tell thee this is ſinful, yet wouldeſt thou not abſtain from it; and what wil ye anſwer to this?

VII. *Challenge*, Oftentimes ye ſinned upon every ſmall temptation, and what will ye anſwer to that? Muſt ye not then confeſs it, and ſay, O how often would I deſerted Chriſt, and imbraced my idols upon a ſmall temptation? Now I intreat you be thinking what ye wil anſwer to theſe ſeven moſt material Challenges, which certainly ſhall be preſented to you at death. I aſſure you, ye muſt either anſwer all your challenges in Chriſt, elſe ye will not get them well anſwered. Therefore I would exhort you to imbrace the Goſpel and Chriſt in it: that ſo let death propoſe never ſo many challenges unto you, ye may anſwer them all as *David* did, *viz. God hath made with me an everlaſting Covenant*, (and that will anſwer all your chal-

challenges) *though my houſe be not ſo with God yet I have the everlaſting Covenant to build my ſalvation upon.*

Now to preſs you to make uſe of Chriſt, I ſhall give you theſe four Conſiderations.

Conſideration 1. If ye imbrace not Chriſt now, Death wil be very unpleaſant unto you. O what elſe can comfort thee, when going through the region of the ſhadow of Death, but this, I am Chriſts, I am Chriſts? is there any other thing can comfort thee in that day, but only this, *I am Chriſts, and he is mine?*

Conſideration 2. If ye imbrace not Chriſt and the great ſalvation now, it will be an hundred to one if ever ye get time or liberty to do it, when ye are going to die. For although many delay their cloſing with Chriſt till death, yet ſcarcely one of a hundred getteth favour to grip Chriſt at death; therefore, think on it, for ye will not get your mind ſo compoſed at death as ye imagine, nor all things done as ye ſuppoſe: therefore now imbrace the great ſalvation.

Conſideration 3. If ye delay your cloſing with Chriſt till death ſeiſe upon you, ye ſhal never be able to make up that loſs, *For will the dead riſe and praiſe God? Or ſhall any come from the land of forgetfulneſs, to take hold upon a crucified Saviour?* Therefore; O will ye take him for your Salvation.

Conſideration 4. If ye will take Chriſt now, he ſhall be your guide, *when ye are going through the valley and ſhadow of death.* And O how bleſſed is the perſon that can ſing that word, *Pſa.*48.14. *This is my God, he will be my guide even unto death.* If ye can ſing that pleaſant ſong. O how may ye be comforted, when your eye ſtrings ſhall begin to break? O how happy is he who can ſay, *Though I walk through the ſhadow of death, yet will I fear no ill; for I know the Lord is with me.* Now this is the acceptable day, and the year of Salvation, therefore do not delay, but imbrace Chriſt, leſt death ſur-

ſurpriſe you ere ye be aware, and ſo that acceptable day be loſt But unto theſe who think they may delay till death, I ſay, ſurely there are many damned Atheiſts in hel that (ſometime) did think as ye think: *I will make all wrongs right when death and I ſhal meet*; I hope that three days repentance will ſatisfie for all my wrongs; for I am ſure, there are many in hell, who did never get three days to think upon their former ways; Therefore, *O Come, come*; and imbrace Chriſt preſently. Now are ye all perſwaded of this truth, that ye ſhall once ſee death? Then ſtudy a tender walking; for (believe me) there are many of us who ſhall go thorow death with many bruiſed bones, becauſe of untender walking before God. We know it is not the multitude of words can perſwade you to imbrace Chriſt, for many of you never minded the thing: but (believe me) death will preach theſe things to you in a more terrible manner then we can do at this time. Therefore I ſay to each of you, O prepare to meet thy God; for, if death find you in an eſtranged eſtate from God, I defy the Angels in Heaven to free you out of that eſtate, and the day is coming wherein thou ſhalt cry out, *O ſlighter of the great ſalvation that I am, I would give ten thouſand worlds for one Sermon again that I once heard, wherein Chriſt was freely offered to me*, When thou ſhalt be tormented without hope of remedy; Therefore, *while it is to day harden not your hearts*, for your late wiſhes ſhal not be granted (when ye are gone) if we make not haſte. O therefore *Haſte, haſte in time, and come out from the land of your captivity, and from the houſe of your bondage*, and take Chriſt for your Redeemer; the guide of your youth and old age. Now unto him, who can lead you thorow all theſe ſteps betwixt you and heaven, be eternal praiſe. *Amen.*

FINIS.

Great and Precious

PROMISES,

OR,

Some Sermons concerning the Promiſes, and the right application thereof:

Whereunto are added ſome other concerning the uſefulneſs of Faith, in advancing Sanctification:

As alſo, three more concerning the Faith of Aſſurance.

By Mr. *ANDREW GRAY*, late Miniſter of the Goſpel in *Glaſgow*.

All being reviſed ſince his death by ſome Friends.

The laſt impreſſion carefully corrected and amended.

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2 Cor. 7. 1. *Having therefore theſe promiſes (dearly beloved) let us cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God.*

Edinburgh, Printed by the Heir of *Andrew Anderſon*, and are to be ſold at his Houſe on the north ſide of the Croſs: *Anno* 1678.

To the Reader.

Christian Reader,

ALthough (upon some considerations) these following Sermons have been keeped back till now, and have waited the vacancy of the Press from other things; yet was it at first intended (the connexion of the purposes so requiring) that they should have come forth as soon as some other of this precious Author, which we did formerly publish: And therefore in the Preface which we then prefixed, we did relate to both, and give the Reader such advertisement as we conceive necessary concerning the one, as well as the other: So that we have nothing to do at present, but to put this little piece into thy hands, commending it to thy serious thoughts, and the Lords blessing upon them. Neither shall we use many words to this purpose. Only we find some help is offered unto thee in three most weighty and concerning points of Christian Religion, 1. *How by the lively exercise of Faith, thou may apply the great and precious Promises.* 2. *How by faith thou*

may advance the work of Sanctification. And 3. *How thy faith may grow up unto assurance. Of all which we may truely say, that nothing can more seasonably take up the thoughts, nor bring more advantage to the souls of the Lords people in these times.*

O how necessary is it in such troublesome days, to learn, how through Faith and Patience we may inherit the Promises: *and now when our strong corruption hath (in a manner) necessitat the wise Phisician to mix unto us so bitter a cup, and give so strong a potion, in what a fainting and swouning condition must we be, if* by the two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, *we receive not also* the strong consolation. *Again when profanity and ungodliness hath so abounded in these Nations, that* from the top of the head to the sole of the foot, there is no soundness, but wounds and bruises, and putrifying sores. *And when the corruption of the time, like* the sons of Zerviah, *are grown too strong even for the* Davids *who are amongst us; what should we study with more*

more earnestness then to purify our hearts by faith, & *by* having these promises, to cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh & spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord? 3. *When the Lord hath removed us so far from peace, that the souls of many have even* forgot prosperity *& the multiplied changes & revolutions in our days, hath so clearly demonstrat the instability of all sublunary glory & so convincingly taught us, that this* is not our rest, *undoubtedly, it is time to* look for a city that hath foundations, and to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure, *the subject then is useful.*

As to the manner of handling it; it is true much accuracy & neatness, is not to be expected in any work of this nature, being only the hasty gleanings of a Church Writer, & as to liveliness & power, though it be as easie to draw a picture with the heat & motion of a living man, as to write or print, these lively motions of the spirit, which do often accompany the Lords Messengers in preaching, & in an eminent measure were also let out upon

this blessed Author; yet we suppose thou wilt find the matter most seriously & feelingly spoken unto, as from a heart which believed, & therefore spake: *Yea, the conceptions & expressions savouring much of an exercised Spirit, not only much taken up in communion with God within it self, but even thirsting also & panting for the salvation of others; nay, (in some measure,* traveling in birth til Christ might be formed in them. *O that more of this holy zeal & fervency, might accompany this great measure of light & knowledge in the mysteries of the Gospel, that the Lord hath graciously bestowed both in Pastors & People in this generation, that once again we might see (as in the days of* John Baptist) the Kingdom of Heaven suffering violence, & the violent taking it by force. *And that the blessed Spirit by the same gracious operations, may so warm and enlarge thy soul in the use of this and all other means for thy eternal Salvation, is, and shall be the sincere desire of,*

Thy servants for Christs sake,
Robert Traill. John Stirling.

GREAT

Great and Precious

PROMISES.

SERMON I.

2 Pet. 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

MAy we not truely say, that if ever the Christians who live in these days shall be advanced to stand within the holy place, and shall inherit everlasting life, all these that are now before his Throne, may lay aside their harps and give us leave to sing? will it not be a mystery, suppose ye, unto heavenly *Enoch* that spent so much of his time in communion and fellowship with God, when he shall behold such Christians within that everlasting rest, that have spent so little of their time in corresponding with God? will it not be a mystery unto believing *Abraham*, when he shall behold such misbelievers, such disputers of the Promises of God, advanced to reign with Christ? will it not be a mystery unto wrestling *Jacob*, when he shall behold these Christians once crowned with immortal glory, that did so little know what it was as Prince to wrestle with God, till they did prevail; Will it not be a wonder to patient *Job*, when he shall behold such impatient Christians as we have been, entring into that blessed place of repose? Will it not be a mystery unto holy *David*, when he shall behold such unmortified Christians entring within that City, into which no unclean thing doth enter?

ter? Will it not be a myſtery unto tender *Joſia*, to behold ſuch Chriſtians as we are, that have our hearts dying as a ſtone within us, entring into heaven? Will it not be a myſtery unto upright *Nathaniel*, to behold ſuch hypocritical Chriſtians, as the moſt part of us are, entring within the holy place, and to ſee thoſe that have been cloathed with hypocriſie and guile, now cloathed with the robes of immortal Glory? And will it not be a myſtery unto ſelf-denied *Paul*, when he ſhall behold ſo proud and ſelfiſh Chriſtians enter into heaven? Give me leave to ſay this, go where we will, we ſhall be matchleſs and ſingular; for if we ſhall go into eternity of pain, we ſhall be the greateſt debtors unto the infinite juſtice of God, in regard of mercies we have received; and if we ſhall enter into eternity of joy, we ſhal be the greateſt debtors unto the ſpotleſs grace of Chriſt, in regard of mercy we have abuſed. There ſhall be none in heaven like to us, and if we ſhall go to hell, there ſhall be few there that may be compared unto us. And let me but add thus further before I come to the words, go where we will we ſhal be out of doubt with our condition: within a ſhort time a real Chriſtian ſhall be exalted above the reach of his misbelieving, a hypocrite ſhall be depreſſed below the reach of his faith, and one that is groſly in nature, he ſhall be abaſed beyond the reach of his preſumption: a Chriſtian ere long ſhal misbelieve no more, a hypocrite ere long ſhall believe no more; and one that is groſly in nature ſhall ere long preſume no more: there is no misbelief in heaven, and there is no faith nor preſumption of wel-being in hell. But to come to that which we intend to ſpeak to, we told you when firſt we began our diſcourſe upon that precious and exalting grace of Faith under a twofold notion and conſideration. Firſt, As it is juſtifying. And ſecondly, as it is ſanctifying. For the firſt we reſolved

ed to ſpeak to it in a twofold conſideration; Firſt, As it cloſeth with Chriſt ſimply as the object upon which it reſteth, and of this we have ſpoken from that place, 1 *John* 3.23. Secondly, As it cloſeth with Chriſt as held forth in the promiſes. And now being to ſpeak of it in this conſideration, we have made choiſe of this place, in which theſe things concerning the promiſes, ſhortly; 1. Ye have that fountain & ſpring from whence the promiſes do flow, holden forth in the firſt words of the verſe, *whereby*, or (as the words may be more fitly rendered) *by whom* relating unto Jeſus Chriſt, who is the original and ſpring of all Promiſes.

2. The properties of the promiſes, and theſe are, 1. The freedom of the promiſes, held forth in that word, *given*, whereby *are given*, which ſpeaketh this, that the promiſes are free gifts, flowing only from good pleaſure. 2. Their unchangeableneſs, and that is holden forth in the word, *Given*, the gifts and calling of God being without repentance. 3. That they are *exceeding great*, and the promiſes are called great, either in reſpect of that price that was laid down to purchaſe the promiſes, or they are called great in reſpect of the great things that are contained in them. 4. That they are *precious*. Now the promiſes are called precious, either in reſpect of their original, that they come from precious Chriſt; or elſe in reſpect of this, that they are the object (I mean the object *quo* or by which) of *precious* Faith, as it is called in the firſt verſe of this Chapter, or elſe they are precious, becauſe they are things that a Chriſtian ought to put an high account upon. For the mond that is rendred precious, may likewiſe be rendred honourable, whereby are given unto us exceeding great and honourable promiſes.

3. We have holden forth in the words the great advantages of the promiſes: *By them we are made partak-*

ers of the divine Nature. Now this is not to be understood of any essential conversion of our substance into the substance of God, but of a Christian having the divine vertues of JesusChrist impressed upon his soul, and expressed in his life and conversation.

And there is this lastly, concerning the promises in the words, even the time when the promises are eminently accomplished; it is, *when we have escaped*, or as the word is, *when we have fled from the corruptions that are in the world through lust*; That is the time when a Christian meeteth with the accomplishment of the promise.

Now before we can speak to any of these, we must speak a little unto some things, as necessary to be known in order to the better understanding of all. 1. We shall not dwell long in pointing out unto you what is a promise, We conceive it is a glorious discovery of the good will of God towards sinners; and withal, a purpose and intendment, (and if we may say) an ingagement to bestow some spiritual or temporal good upon them, or to withhold some spiritual or temporal evil from them. And certain it is, that in this description of the promise, there is a divine harmony betwixt Mercy and Truth, betwixt Righteousnes and Peace, they kiss one another. Neither shal we stand long to point out the distinction of the promises. 1. There are some promises that are conditional, and there are some promises that are absolute: absolute promises are these that have no condition annexed unto the performance of them; such a promise is that, that God will destroy the world no more by water, that is an absolute promise: such a promise was that of Gods sending his Son into the world, that was an absolute promise; and such is that promise of conversion, in giving of the heart of flesh, it is an absolute promise. As for the conditional promises, they are these that do

do require some condition to be performed by the Christian before the accomplishment of the promise, such as that promise of salvation is, requireth believing as going before it, *He that believeth shall be saved*: And pardon, it is promised unto a Christian upon repentance, and yet we confess that there is not a conditional promise that is in all the Covenant of grace, but it may be reduced into an absolute promise, in regard that the thing promised (in the conditional promise) is one absolute free gift, and the condition of the promise is another. 2. There are some promises that are temporal, and some that are spiritual; temporal promises are these, that promise some temporal thing unto a Christian; and spiritual promises are these, that promise the bestowing of some thing that is of everlasting concernment. 3. There are some promises that are not accomplished in this life, such as this, *That we shall see him as he is, and shall be made like unto him*: But for the promises of Faith and Justification, these are accomplished in this life. 4. There are some promises that are extraordinary, and there are some promises that are common: Extraordinary promises are these, that are given to some particular believers, as a singular priviledge, such was the promise that was given to *Abraham*, in his *seed should all the families of the earth be blessed*: and that promise that was given to *Rebekah*, *that the elder should serve the younger*: As for common promises, they are these, that every believer in Christ hath a right to make use of it.

Neither shall we stand long to point out, that it is the duty of a Christian to be much in the exercise of Faith upon the promises: it is clear from *Psa.* 62. 8. *Trust in him at all times, ye people.* And it is clear from the practice of that precious cloud of witnesses recorded of in *Heb.* 11. that spent their days in imbracing

bracing of the promiſes. But, 7. We would have you conſider, that it is more eaſie for a Chriſtian believer to believe ſpritual promiſes, then to believe temporal promiſes: it is eaſier to truſt Chriſt for eternal ſalvation, then to truſt him for our daily food, when we are redacted unto ſtraits. And the grounds upon which we aſſert this, may be theſe; 1. Becauſe it is hard for a Chriſtian to believe that Chriſts death reacheth for the purchaſing of temporal promiſes, which more eaſily he taketh up in ſpiritual promiſes: for a Chriſtian can hardly believe that ſuch a thing was in Chriſts intention, as to die for his dayly food, which is moſt certain, if we conſider it as a ſpecial mercy. 2. In a Chriſtians believing of ſpiritual promiſes there is often ſome ſenſe and reaſon that helpeth him to the exerciſe of faith, at leaſt, they preſs not the contrary; but to believe a temporal promiſe when a Chriſtian is redacted unto a ſtrait; and that he can ſee no outgate preſent, ſenſe and reaſon ſtands upon the top of his faith, and preſſeth him to diſpair; As for inſtance, when a Chriſtian is living upon the top of a mountain, and knoweth not where to ſup at night; to believe that there is a promiſe upon which he may reſt, that he ſhall not want his food; but that if the Lord have ſervice for him, he will provide, here he hath not only reaſon to diſpute againſt it, but the ſtrong pinching ſenſe of hunger, both crying out, *How can bread be given in the wilderneſs?* 3. The temptations that aſſault a Chriſtian, to miſbelieve upon temporal promiſes, they are more ſubtile and more connatural to a Chriſtian, then his temptations that aſſault him in reſting upon the ſpiritual promiſes. When a Chriſtian is in ſtraits in the world, the temptations that hinder his exerciſe of faith, they are more conſonant to fleſh and bloud; we are ready to yield to miſbelief then, becauſe we think it is rational and

and ſpeaketh the truth: 4. A Chriſtian is often ſo affrighted by his daily failings, or ſome particular more groſs out-breakings in his life, that howbeit he may (through grace) be helped to believe that the Lord ſhall make out theſe promiſes which concern his eternal ſalvation, and ſo do him good in the latter end: yet he may be ſadly perplexed and diſtruſifully, in making uſe of any particular temporary promiſe, for drawing forth any comfort or incouragment therefrom, as to his preſent exigent; becauſe he knoweth that although the Lord doth forgive his peoples iniquities, yet may he take vengeance on their inventions, *Pſa.* 99.8. and therefore may puniſh his preſent failing with the like calamities as he hath done others. 5. There is alſo much of a natural and carnal ſelf-love to a preſent life, remaining in the beſt, that we are many times worſe to ſatisfie in our ſecurities for the things of this life, then of that which is to come; and can more eaſily truſt the Lord for our ſouls, then for our bodies; ſo that though his naked word will ſometimes ſatisfie us for the one, yet it will not for the other. And the laſt ground of it may by a Chriſtians unacquaintedneſs with that lot of exerciſing Faith upon temporal promiſes, there being many who think not that there is uſe for faith, except for Salvation and the things above, which maketh his faith upon theſe more difficult, then upon promiſes that are ſpiritual: And this may appear moſt clearly, in that we find men more eaſily bear their ſpiritual wants (even a Chriſtian that is moſt exerciſed) then they their temporal wants: and more corruption and impatience doth ariſe from temporal want, then from ſpiritual want.

2. Conſider, that all a Chriſtians duties are turned over into promiſes: there is not a duty that is required of a Chriſtian, but it is converted into a promiſe.

Is

Is not Faith a duty, in 1 *Joh.* 3. 23. *This is his commandment that ye should believe?* And is not that turned over into a promise, in *Jer.* 3. 16. *Thou shalt call me thy Father?* The word importeth, not only an act of necessity, but of violence, thou shalt do it, and in the 13. of *Zachery* at the close, *Thou shalt call me thy Father.* And so in *Ezek.* 11. 19. Is not mortification a Christians duty, *Col.* 3. 5. *Mortifie therefore your members?* and it is turned over in a promise, *Jer.* 32. 28. and *Ezek.* 36. 29. where he promiseth, that he will purge away all their uncleanness; and it is most clear, from *Mic.* 7. 19. *I will subdue* (saith he) *all thine iniquities*, it is not said, *thou must subdue them*, but *I will do it.* Is not also the knowledge of God a commanded duty? and yet it is turned over in a promise, in the Covenant of grace, *They shall know me from the highest to the lowest, neither shall there be need any more, that one should say, know the Lord, for they shall be al taught of me.* Is not the commandment of fear your duty, as it is clear, from *Eccl.* 12. 13. and yet that is likewise turned over in a promise, *I will put my fear in their inward part, that they shall not depart away from me.* So tenderness is a Christians duty; and yet it is turned over in a promise: *I will take away their heart of stone, and give them an heart of flesh.* And that I may say no more of this, look but to these four places, and there ye will see almost all duties turned over in promises; there is *Jer.* 31. *Jer.* 32. *Ezek.* 11. and *Ezek.* 36. ye will see all the duties of the Covenant converted into promises. But may not some say, what advantage is there of this? much certainly every way, that duties are turned over into promises: it may give a Christian hope, that he shall once perform these duties: will ye not once be tender? yes certainly, because your tenderness lieth within a promise; will ye not once be much in the exercise of fear? No doubt ye

ye will, and the ground of it is this, because your fear lyeth within a promise, and so of the rest. And, 2. There is this advantage of it, that all the duties required of a Christian, are turned over in promises, because by this means a Christian may go to God, when he cannot perform such a duty, and desire him to fulfil his word, and accomplish his promise; and so may make use, not only of the Omnipotency of God, but of the faithfulness of God also.

There is this third consideration that we would propose, that there are some things of a Christian within a promise, that he doth not believe to be within it, especially these three; First, the challenges of a Christian are within a promise, when ye are convinced, that is the accomplishment of a promise, this is clear from *Isa.* 30. 21. where convictions and challenges are turned over in a promise; *When thou art turning unto the right hand, or to the left; thine ears shall hear a voice behind thee crying, this is the way, walk in it:* And it may be clear, that our convictions are the accomplishment of promises, because it is a work of the Comforters, as well to conceive, *John* 16. 9. as its for him to make one rejoyce; and if a Christian could believe that his challenge were the accomplishment of a promise, he might imbrace his challenges, he might see the faithfulness of God in his challenges, and he might see much Love in his challenges. 2. A Christians cross is within a promise, so that when a Christian meets with such afflictions, he may sit down and cry out, this is the accomplishment of a promise, and this is clear from *Psa.* 89. 31, 32. wherein the midst of the promises of the Covenant of Grace; that promise of visiting their iniquities with rods, is put in the bosom of them; and from *Psa.* 19. 77. *In faithfulness hast thou afflicted me;* Why doth *David* say, in faithfulness? It was this, because this cross was the accomplishment

of

of a promiſe; and it may be clear alſo from that word, *Heb.* 12. 7. *Forget not the exhortation* (ſpeaking of the croſs) the word is, *Forget not the conſolation that ſpeaketh unto you.* As if the holy Ghoſt did ſay, croſſes do yield much conſolation, as in verſ. 11. *They yield the peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs*; And if this were believed, that our croſſes were the accompliſhment of the promiſes, it would help a Chriſtian unto much humble ſubmiſſion, and there would not be much murmuring under them, if once we did believe that they were the accompliſhment of a promiſe; Yea, there is this advantage further, that if we did believe that our croſſes were the accompliſhment of a promiſe, we would be much in advancing holineſs under our croſs. There is nothing that obſtructeth the ſweet fruits of righteouſneſs, under a croſs ſo much as impatience; & I would ſay this to commend the croſs, a Chriſtian never moveth ſo ſwiftly to heaven, as when he is under a ſanctified croſs; a croſs when it is ſanctified, will prove a Chriſtians motion to Heaven more then the enjoyments, for our enjoyments ordinarily do retard our way as much as further it. And there is this, Thirdly, that is within the promiſe, even your dayly food, and the hairs of your head; the hairs of a Chriſtians head are numbered, and within the Covenant. So that ye may ſee what a high reſpect Chriſt hath put upon Chriſtians, that is clear from that word, *Pſa.* 111. 5, 8. *He hath given meat unto them that fear Him, He will ever be mindful of his Covenant.*

Our fourth Conſideration ſhall be, to point out a [illegible] theſe grounds upon which Chriſt doth delay his [illegible]compliſhment of the promiſes, it is certain that [illegible]riſtians is oftentimes put to this, *Doth his promiſe fail for evermore?* and cryeth out, *why art thou become unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail*; and the grounds of this delay are theſe; Chriſt knoweth that a Chriſtian

an can often better improve the delay of the accompliſhment of the promiſe, then he can improve the accompliſhment it ſelf: we might find this in our experience, it being (for the moſt part) eaſier for a Chriſtian to bear his croſſes, then to bear his enjoyments: I think *David* never had ſo ſweet a time, as then, when he was purſued as a Partridge by his ſon *Abſolon*; then grace did breathe forth moſt ſweetly in his actions; but let *David* be under proſperity, and then we ſee he falleth in the ſin of Adultery; And therefore never repine when ye are under a croſs, for certainly, if we had ſpiritual underſtanding, we would not judge it ſo great a hazard to be under a croſs, as under proſperity, ſince we have greater ſtrength to bear the one, then to endure the other. 2. The ſloathfulneſs of a Chriſtian to whom the promiſes are made, this makes the promiſes to be delayed in their performance, as was clear in the people of *Iſrael*, they are fourty years in a wilderneſs before that promiſe of entering into *Canaan* is accompliſhed; It was a promiſe that could have been accompliſhed in a few days, and yet becauſe of their ſin, it was not accompliſhed for fourty years, ye may ſee from that word, in *Numb.* 14. 33, 34. 3. The accompliſhment of the promiſes is delayed, that Faith may be more put in exerciſe; this is clear from that remarkable word, *Pſa.* 105. 19. *until the time that his word came*; that is, until the word of the Lord was accompliſhed; *the word of the Lord tryed him*, that is, it was the matter of his exerciſe, an exerciſe eſpecially unto Faith; for indeed it is much for a Chriſtian to believe upon a word, when it is delayed in its accompliſhment. The fourth ground of delay is, that the exerciſe of Prayer may be more; and it is certain, that the beſt improvement of delayes is, to be much in Prayer; the promiſes, they occaſion prayer, as is clear from

Exod. 4. last, *They believed, and bowed down their heads and worshipped*, and from 2 *Sam.* 7. 27. where the great promises being made to *David*, he cryeth out, *Therefore have I found in my heart to pray this prayer unto God*; and it is clear from *Psa.* 119. 49. *Perform the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.* It is a bad improvement of delays, when we turn impatient, and it is a bad improvement of delayes, when we quite our confidence: Know that promises are accomplished after delayes, and they have a luster upon them, that they may compense all the delayes. 5. There is this other ground of the delayes of accomplishment of the promises, even that the thing that is promised may be sweet to a Christian when it cometh: this is clear from that word of *Solomon*, Prov. 13. 12. *Hope deferred maketh the heart sick; but when the desire doth come, is as a tree of life*: O but a mercy that cometh to a Christian through a promise, it is sweet, yea, a drink of cold water taken up as the accomplishment of a promise, Is more sweet *then a feast of fat things full of marrow, wine on the lees well refined*; to take up your bread and your drink as the accomplishment of your promises, it would make them refreshful to you. 6. The Lord delayes his promises, that a Christian may be more in the exercise of dependency, and may be alwayes kept about the Throne. A Christian goeth to God from a threefold principle, he goeth to God from a principle of Faith, from a principle of necessity, and from a principle of love: but would you know that which putteth a Christian oftnest to God? it is a principle of necessity: and believe it, that if necessity did not drive a Christian unto the foot of the Throne, we would seldom go from a principle of Love, or from a principle of Faith. And there is this last ground of the delay of the accomplishment of the

the promises, that the glory of the wisdom of God may appear, and the glory of his power in the accomplishment of the promise. When the promise is long beneath ground, then the wisdom and power of God doth more appear in the accomplishment of that promise. And from this I would only say to Christians that are under that exercise, complaining of the want of the performance of the promises, these few things, believe that the promise shall once be accomplished, that *though the vision tarry, yet at last it shall speak*: 2. Believe, that every houres delay of the accomplishment of the promises hath a sweet design of love: there is not one moment of delay, but it is for the advantage of a Christian, as is clear from that word, *Rom.* 8. 28. And, 3. that promise that cometh after long delayes, It hath these three sweet, and soul-refreshing attendants. 1. It is performed most seasonably, a Christian, if he will observe, he will see infinite wisdom shining in timing the accomplishment of the promise, to such a particular day: a Christian will be constrained to cry of it, if the promise had been fulfilled before, there had not been such Art of wisdom appearing in the performance of it. 3. That the promise when it is accomplished, will engage a Christian more in the exercise of Love, then four promises accomplished at a short and smaller time: there is nothing that will so inflame the soul with Love, as to have a promise accomplished after delayes. And, 3. The promises accomplished after delayes, have much sense waiting upon the performance thereof: I think hardly a Christian ever met with the accomplishment of a promise after long delay, but his *soul was made as a watered garden, and as springs of water, whose waters fail not*: this promise faileth and cometh to a Christian perfumed with love.

Now we shall shut up our discourse at this time, &

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ſhall only ſpeak to theſe ſix defects of a Chriſtians Faith, in believing the promiſes. 1. That our faith is impatient, we cannot ſtay upon the promiſe, if it be delayed; Hence ye will ſee that in Scripture often, patience is annexed to faith; which ſpeaketh this, that it is impoſſible for a Chriſtian to believe as he ought, that wanteth the exerciſe of patience, See *Heb. 6.* 12. *Be ye followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promiſe*; And that word in Rev. *This is the faith and patience of the Saints.* 2. Our faith in cloſing with the promiſes it is moſt unconſtant; A Chriſtian when firſt a promiſe is born in upon his ſpirit, he will then believe the promiſe and joyn with it; but after ſix or ſeven days go about, he will change his Faith; that is remarkably clear from *Exod.* 4. 31. compared with *Exod.* 6. 9. When firſt the promiſe cometh to the people of *Iſrael*, that they ſhall go out of *Egypt*, it is ſaid of them in the fourth Chapter at the cloſe, *They believed the promiſes and worſhipped*; But look to them in *Exod.* 6. 9. and there ye will ſee them not believing, becauſe of *bitterneſs and anxiety of heart*; And I will tell you the grounds why our Faith is unconſtant; 1. Sometimes the reading of a promiſe to a Chriſtian will be as ſavory meat; ſometimes when a Chriſtian will read one time in the Covenant, it will be perfumed with Love, and his ſoul will be tranſported with joy after it, and at another time when he ſhal read that promiſe again, it will be *taſteleſs as the white of an egg*, and *as his ſorrowful meat.* 2. That we are not much in ſtudying the exerciſe of the things that are promiſed, which certainly would cut ſhort many of our debates. There is this third defect of our Faith, that we are not diligent, diligent Faith we call this, that after a Chriſtian hath believed, he would be much in the exerciſe of prayer for the accompliſhment of the promiſe, he would

would be much in the exerciſe of meditation to make that promiſe ſweet and lively to him. And a fourth defect is this, We build our Faith more upon diſpenſations then upon the Word; when diſpenſations ſay that which the promiſe ſaith, then we will believe; but when diſpenſations ſpeak the contrary language unto the promiſe, then we will reject our confidence and hope. I will tell you two great myſteries of believing, it is hard for a Chriſtian to believe when the commentary ſeemeth to deſtroy the Text, that is, when the commentary ſeemeth to declare, that the promiſe ſhall never be accompliſhed. In ſum it is this, It is hard to believe when diſpenſations will ſay the word of the Lord will fail, and when promiſes bids you believe. 2. It is hard for a Chriſtian to take impoſſibilities in the one hand, and the word of promiſe in the other, and ſay, O precious Chriſt, reconcile theſe two together, that impoſſibilities do not deſtroy the promiſe, but that the promiſe may be accompliſhed, notwithſtanding of this. 5. We have theſe defects of faith amongſt us, that we build our Faith more upon ſenſe then upon the word of promiſe; when a Chriſtian is in a good frame, he will believe, but when Chriſt hideth his Face, he will then give his hope; And laſtly, there is this that our Faith upon the promiſes is general, we believe the truth of the promiſes, but we ſtudy not to make a particular application of them. I ſhall not ſtand long to make any uſe of what we have ſpoken; Only I would have the Chriſtians of this age, and thoſe that are here, to go home with this conviction, the damnable neglect of believing the promiſes. A Chriſtian neglecteth theſe three duties of Religion moſt, he neglecteth the duty of ſelf-examining, the duty of believing the promiſes, and that noble ſoul-exalting duty of meditation: theſe three duties a Chriſtian doth ſo conſtantly neglect, that almoſt he

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is above the reach of conviction, that he doth neglect them. But I would say a word unto these that are destitute of the Faith of the Promises, and are strangers unto these blessed things that are recorded within the Covenant: And it is only this; doubtless ye must believe your senses, if ye will not believe his Word. *It* is a question indeed, which of all the senses shall be most satisfied in Heaven, whether that of seeing, *when we shall behold the King in his beauty, and see him as he is*; or that of hearing, when we shall hear these melodious *Halelujahs* of that *innumerable company*, which are *about the Throne*; without any jarring amongst them all; or that of smelling, when we shall find the sweet perfume of his garments, which are perfumed *with all the powders of the Merchant*; or that of touching, when we find *Maries* inhibition taken off, *touch me not*, and be admitted to imbrace him who is now *ascended to his Father*; or that of tasting, when we shall drink of these *rivers of Consolation, that shall never run dry*. This, I say, is indeed a question; But give me leave to tell you, O atheists and enemies of God: It is also a question, which of all the five senses of a Reprobate shal be most tormented in Hell, & what would you answer to it now? whether think ye the sense of sight, when ye shall behold that darkness of wrath, the devil and his angels, and your fellow prisoners in that dungeon? Or whether shall your sense of hearing be most tormented in hel, when ye hear these scrichings and howlings that shall eternally ascend up before God, by the souls that are in prison? O but the greatest enemy would have compassion upon his enemy to hear their crys: Or whether wil ye say the sense of tasting shal be most tormented, when ye shal drink of these *rivers of brimstone*? Or will the sense of touching, when ye shall be eternally scorched with these flames of eternal indignation? Or the sense of smelling, when

when ye shall eternally be as it were suffocated with the smoke of that sulphurious furnace that shall never be quenched. O think you if *Cain* would come from hell and preach that doctrine, that we should not persecute the saints, would we listen unto him? If *Absolon* should come from hell, and should preach against the evil of ambition, would we listen unto him? and if *Achitophel* should rise from the dead, and preach that doctrine unto you, *Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom*, would we stop our ears? Or if *Judas* would come from hell, and preach to you the evil of hypocrisie, in betraying the Son of man with a kiss, would we believe him? Or if *Dives* that is recorded in the Gospel should come from hel, and choise that Text to preach upon, *Jam.* 5. 1. *Go to ye rich men and howl, and weep for your miseries that shall come upon you.* And if *Demas* would come and second him with that word, love not the world, nor the things that are in the world. I fear ye would cry out, we will imbrace that doctrine *at another time*. We desire not to insist much upon these; but, O to believe, that there is an eternity of pain, and that there is an eternity of joy. I will give you a description of the atheist, and let him think upon it, it is easier to convince hundreds of you, that ye want the fear of God, then that ye want the faith and love of God. Oh, an Imaginary faith, and a conceit of love, will ye ever quite these two idols. I confess, once ye shall have a Faith that no man shall ever rob you of, and that is, the faith of that truth, that when once ye enter into eternity of pain, there is no redemption out of that place. Awake, awake, for behold the Judge cometh, and he shall render vengeance unto these that know him not. To his blessed and most precious Name, we desire to give praise.

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SERMON III.

2 Pet. 1.4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious Promiſes, that by theſe you might be partakers of the divine nature, having eſcaped the corruption that is in the world through luſt.*

THough Juſtice and Judgement be the habitation of his Throne, yet Mercy and Truth do go before it as two divine Uſhers to convey us home unto God. There are theſe two things that we would have Chriſtians principally to ſtudy; 1. That ye would be much in the ſtudy of theſe wrongs and injuries that ye have done to Chriſt. And, 2. That ye would be much in the ſtudy of theſe infinite acts of precious condeſcendency that Chriſt hath manifeſted towards you, that the one may provoke you unto ſorrow and humility, and the other may provoke you unto a ſweet aſtoniſhment and admiration. And I would ask you this, if Chriſt ſhould preſent that challenge unto you, which *Abſolon* preſented unto *Huſhai*, *Is this thy kindneſs unto thy friend?* O beloved, what could you anſwer, when you were thus reproved? I think if Chriſt have not forgetfulneſs for that bleſſed end, to forget the wrongs and injuries of his own, I know not unto what uſe Chriſt ſhould have forgetfulneſs; for he knoweth not what it is to forget our good works, but he hath a bleſſed art of forgetting our wrongs, though we may ſay on the contrary that we have a curſed art of forgetting them our ſelves. There are theſe three things that a Chriſtian doth forget; they much forget Chriſt, that is the great Author of the Promiſes, ſo that he may charge them with this, *why have ye forgotten me?* 2. They forget their mercies, and theſe divine receipts of love, that Chriſt hath given unto them. 3. They forget even their iniquity, yea, ſometimes they forget them before Chriſt doth forget them, and paſs an

act of pardon upon them. I ſhall not ſtand long to plead with you for undervaluing of that bleſſed and noble plant of renown; I think if there were no more to evidence that low eſteem that we have of Chriſt, but only this, that we are ſo much in ſlighting the promiſes, it were more then ſufficient; but beſides, is there not this to teſtifie how much you undervalue that *holy and juſt one*; that ye ſtudy more to have an inward. We may call the Chriſtians of the time *Nephtalie*; they are *as a hinde let looſe*, and they give goodly words, but we do not give Chriſt godly practice; and is there not this alſo that teſtifieth our undervaluing of Chriſt, that we ſlight ſo much ſecret and retired correſpondence and communion with him? I ſuppoſe there are ſome that are here, whoſe conſciences beareth them record, they do not exerciſe themſelves unto godlineſs, and I ſhal only ſay that word, that *Gideon* ſpake in another caſe, *If God be with us, how then is all this come upon us?* ſuch a ſpirit of formality, ſuch a ſpirit of lazineſs, ſuch a ſpirit of hardneſs, and ſuch a ſpirit of undervaluing of Chriſt? I ſuppoſe that if there were a Chronicle written of all the lives of the Saints that have been ſince *Adams* days; and the Chriſtians of this time ſhould read over that Chronicle, when they ſhold begin and read the life of *Adam*, they might put this to the cloſe of it, my life is not like his; & when they ſhould read the life of *Abel*, they might put this to the cloſe of it, my life it not like his; and when they ſhould read the life of *Enoch*, they might put this to the cloſe of it, my life is not like his: O to which of the Saints can we go? and if ye ſhould call, is there any that would anſwer you, *thy life is like mine.*

But to come to the words; we told you at the laſt occaſion that we ſpake upon them, that there were theſe things concerning the promiſes, holden forth in them, 1. The riſe of the promiſes is holden forth in theſe words, *whereby*, or as we cleared, the word may be thus

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rendered, *by whom*, which relateth unto Jeſus Chriſt.

The ſecond thing concerning the promiſes holden forth in the verſe, is, the property of the promiſes, and they are theſe four; 1. That the promiſes are free, holden forth in that word, *whereby are given unto us*; all the promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant are free and not debt. There is that ſecond property of the promiſes, that they are *unchangeable*, holden forth in that word, *Given*, the gifts and the calling of God *being without repentance*. And the third property of the promiſes was, That they were exceeding *Great*, and the fourth, That they were exceeding *Precious*.

The third thing concerning the promiſes, holden forth in the words, is the advantages that floweth to a Chriſtian by the promiſes, that by them they might be *made partakers of the divine nature*.

And the laſt thing concerning them was, that time when the promiſes were eſpecially accompliſhed, it was then, when *we had eſcaped the pollutions of the world through luſt*.

Now as for the firſt thing, to wit, the fountain, original and riſe of the promiſes, which is Jeſus Chriſt, *by whom*; In ſpeaking unto this, we ſhall ſpeak a little unto theſe two; 1. In what reſpects Chriſt may be ſaid to be the fountain and original of the promiſes; and we conceive he may be ſaid to be ſo; Firſt, Becauſe he purchaſed the promiſes unto us by his own precious bloud. There is not a promiſe in all the everlaſting Covenant, but it is the price of the bloud of the Son of God; this is clear in *Epheſ.* 2. 12, 13. where ſpeaking of the Gentiles that they were ſtrangers unto the Covenant of promiſe: he ſetteth down in the 13. verſ. the way by which they were brought near unto the Covenant, and had right unto it, it was *through the blood of his croſs*: and it is clear in *Epheſ.* 3. 6. that the promiſes of the Goſpel *were given unto us in him*, that is, through the purchaſe of him, and his

his merits; and 1 *Pet.* 1. 19. where we are ſaid *to be bought by his bloud*, or, the promiſe of Redemption was the price of bloud. Secondly, Chriſt may be ſaid to be the fountain of the promiſes, in this reſpect, that he is the perſon unto whom the promiſes of the Covenant are firſt made, and through him are made over unto us; this is clear in *Gal.* 3. 16. the promiſes were given unto *Abraham*, not unto many ſeeds: but as unto one, that is *Chriſt*; and it is clear from 2 *Tim.* 1. 9. where the promiſes of grace and ſalvation are ſaid to be given unto us in *him before the world was made*. It is true that the promiſes are not given to Chriſt, conſidered only as the Son of God, (for ſo he had no other relation to us then the Father or the Holy Ghoſt) but yet they are firſt made to him as the Mediator and *head of his Church*, and as that bleſſed *Days-man*, *and King of Saints*, and the great Lord keeper of all the Rights of the young heirs of Glory; *And we all receive of his fulneſs*, *and grace for grace*. Thirdly, there is this reſpect, in which Chriſt may be ſaid to be the fountain of the promiſes, that he it is by whom we have a right unto all the promiſes; this is clear, 1 *Cor.* 3. 12, 13. where theſe two are conjoyned, *ye are Chriſts*, and then, *all things are yours*; if once a ſoul cloſe with Chriſt in the Covenant of promiſe, there is not one promiſe in Scripture, but he may write this ſuperſcription above it, *This is mine, this is mine*. Fourthly, Chriſt may be ſaid to be the fountain of the promiſes, in regard that he is the perſon that applyeth the promiſes, and maketh us to reſt upon them, and to believe them; this *David* did acknowledge, *Pſa.* 119. 49. *Remember thy word unto thy ſervant, upon which thou haſt cauſed me to hope*, as if *David* ſaid, I had never believed a promiſe, except thou hadſt cauſed me; and it is clear, *Eph.* 2. 8. where faith is called the gift of God, even faith to believe the promiſes, it is the royal donation and gift of Chriſt. 5. He

may be said to be the fountain of the promises, in that he qualifieth us for the accomplishment of them. Christ giveth us strength to obey the condition that is annexed to the promise, & Christ he infuseth habitual grace in us, by which we may be helped to exercise faith upon the promises; so that grant all the Scripture were promises, yet if Christ did not help us, we would never believe a promise, and there would never a promise be accomplished unto us. 6. The last respect in which Christ may be said to be the fountain of the promises, is, that al the promises of the everlasting covenant, they have their accomplishment through him, according to that word, 2 *Cor.* 1. 20. *All the promises of God are in him, yea, and in him Amen*; so that ye are to bless Christ, not only for the giving of the promises, but for the accomplishment of them also.

That which secondly we shall speak to from this, that Christ is the fountain of the promises, shal be to press upon Christians these three excellent and soul-concerning duties; The first, that they would not have a light account of the promises, since they are rivelets and streams that flow from that blessed ocean: O but if a Christian did believe that the promise that he hath for his daily bread, it was bought with the bloud of the second person of the blessed Trinity, would he not have an high account of that promise? And let me tell you, it is impossible for the promises to be in high account with you, till once ye reduce them unto their rise, and to their fountain; but once know that all the promises are sweet streams of Love that have run through the heart of precious Christ & from thence they have flowed unto you, and then when this is believed, how shall ye sit down, and comfort your selves in the promises, and rejoyce exceedingly in them.

The second duty that we press upon you from this, is, that since Christ is the fountain and original of the promises be much in the application of the promises. And

And here I shall speak a little upon these three things; 1. A little unto the evidences & marks of those that have a right to apply the promises; & shal only name unto you these few: The first is, to be a person under convictions of sensible need and necessity of such a promise; have ye convictions of such a necessity? Then from that ye may infer, I have a right to the promises and are not these glad tidings? I know there are some that are under such convictions of their sin, that they think it boldness to apply the promises, but I would say this unto you, that if ye were under sensible convictions of your lostness, ye would give a world for an hair of a promise whereby to hang: believe it, the exercise of misbelief is never at its hight, til ye would be content to dig through the earth to get a promise, & till we were at that, that our souls would pursue after them from the one end of the world to the other: & for the grounds of this assertion, that sensible necessity giveth a right to the promises, If ye wil look to these great promises of the everlasting Covenant, are they not given to that Christian that is under a need, *Is.* 55. 1, 2. and *Mat.* 11. 28. where the great promise of the Gospel is given out, and the invitation of Jesus Christ, is unto these that are weary *and heavy laden.* Christ would account it an excellent courtisie, that ye would not dispute but believe, and that ye would look upon your necessities as his call to believe the promises. 2. A person that hath an high account of the promises, he hath a right to apply the promises. Let once your soul close with Christ by Faith and Love, and then you may with boldness close with the promises. I confess if ye were more in believing the promises, we would have a higher and more full esteem of the promiser: Would you know the reason that Christ is not accounted matchless, it is, because of this our necessities of the promises is not always within our sight, and our exercising of Faith upon the promises is not

our dayly work. 3. This looketh like a right to the promise; that which is born in upon a Christians spirit when he is near God in prayer, and is under most sensible exercise of his own infirmity, he hath readily a right to apply the promise: As for instance, when a Christian is debarring himself out of Christ, which is but an unpleasant exercise; to meet with a promise born in upon their spirit, that giveth them some ground of hope, that they may apply and rest upon Christ; or when a Christian is fainting under affliction, and is like to give over; to meet with a word of promise born in upon his spirit, that doth uphold him in the day of his tryal, he may probably conclude he hath a right to believe that promise. 4. There is that evidence, persons that have a high account of the promises, that have a right to apply the promises, it is an excellent & most concerning work for a Christian to believe the excellency of the promises, when he cannot have the actual application of the promises. For when once a Christian cometh to this, that the great things of the everlasting Covenant are matchless in his eyes; then that is the *valley* of *Achor*; and a door of hope, that ere long Christ will apply them. 5. When a Christian hath great delight in the promises, when they are sweet to his taste, and are the refreshing and rejoycing of his heart, that is an undeniable sign that he hath a right to make use of such promises; were your souls never refreshed by reading of the boundless Covenant of love, & the sweet promises that are in it? I would have Christians marking these promises that have upholden them in their straits, I would have them marking the promises that have been lively to their souls, and say, this once was my goodly meat, and made me to rejoyce in the *house of my affliction*; and I would have a Christian marking the time of the accomplishment of the promises, in which he will see infinite wisdom shining in ordering the accomplishment of the promises

mises to such a time. And I would have a Christian marking the frame of his own spirit, when the promises are accomplished (as ye wil find often in Scripture) & by all this, ye should find such a reviving and profitable delight in the promises, that should give a very full evidence of our right unto them. 6. Lastly, when a Christian under straits can receive consolation from no other thing, but all prove physicians of no value & miserable comforters; when a Christian is convinced, there is no joy to be had under such a cross but in the faith of the promises, that is an evidence that this person hath a right to the promises. I would only say this, O beloved in the Lord, is not this your guilt, your undervaluing of the promises, and your little exercise of faith? I would pose you with this, when last studied ye to apply any promise of the Covenant of grace? When last did ye exercise faith upon any of them? Shall I tell you what is the practice of the most part of us, we study perhaps to apply one promise, but for the rest of the promises we lay them aside, and do totally neglect them: we study to apply the promises of salvation, and of having redemption through Christ, but for the promises of sanctification, for the promises to help us to perform duties, for the promises to support us under the cross, for the promises to comfort us in our way to heaven, for promises in reference to all ordinary things, we are not much in application of these: O but if a Christian were believing the promises, he might sit down even while he is here, and sing one of the songs of Zion, though yet *but in a strange land*.

The second thing that I shall speak to upon the application of the promises, shal be to propose unto you some rules that ye would make use of in the application of them; and shall name unto you these,

First, Study these four things, one is the faithfulness and truth of the promises, that such a thing is

our dayly work. 3. This looketh like a right to the promiſe; that which is born in upon a Chriſtians ſpirit when he is near God in prayer, and is under moſt ſenſible exerciſe of his own infirmity, he hath readily a right to apply the promiſe: As for inſtance, when a Chriſtian is debarring himſelf out of Chriſt, which is but an unpleaſant exerciſe; to meet with a promiſe born in upon their ſpirit, that giveth them ſome ground of hope, that they may apply and reſt upon Chriſt; or when a Chriſtian is fainting under affliction, and is like to give over; to meet with a word of promiſe born in upon his ſpirit, that doth uphold him in the day of his tryal, he may probably conclude he hath a right to believe that promiſe. 4. There is that evidence, perſons that have a high account of the promiſes, that have a right to apply the promiſes, it is an excellent & moſt concerning work for a Chriſtian to believe the excellency of the promiſes, when he cannot have the actual application of the promiſes. For when once a Chriſtian cometh to this, that the great things of the everlaſting Covenant are matchleſs in his eyes; then that is the *valley* of *Achor*; and a door of hope, that ere long Chriſt will apply them. 5. When a Chriſtian hath great delight in the promiſes, when they are ſweet to his taſte, and are the refreſhing and rejoycing of his heart, that is an undeniable ſign that he hath a right to make uſe of ſuch promiſes; were your ſouls never refreſhed by reading of the boundleſs Covenant of love, & the ſweet promiſes that are in it? I would have Chriſtians marking theſe promiſes that have upholden them in their ſtraits, I would have them marking the promiſes that have been lively to their ſouls, and ſay, this once was my goodly meat, and made me to rejoyce in the *houſe of my affliction*; and I would have a Chriſtian marking the time of the accompliſhment of the promiſes, in which he will ſee infinite wiſdom ſhining in ordering the accompliſhment of the promiſes

miſes to ſuch a time. And I would have a Chriſtian marking the frame of his own ſpirit, when the promiſes are accompliſhed (as ye wil find often in Scripture) & by all this, ye ſhould find ſuch a reviving and profitable delight in the promiſes, that ſhould give a very full evidence of our right unto them. 6. Laſtly, when a Chriſtian under ſtraits can receive conſolation from no other thing, but all prove phyſicians of no value & miſerable comforters; when a Chriſtian is convinced, there is no joy to be had under ſuch a croſs but in the faith of the promiſes, that is an evidence that this perſon hath a right to the promiſes. I would only ſay this, O beloved in the Lord, is not this your guilt, your undervaluing of the promiſes, and your little exerciſe of faith? I would poſe you with this, when laſt ſtudied ye to apply any promiſe of the Covenant of grace? When laſt did ye exerciſe faith upon any of them? Shall I tell you what is the practice of the moſt part of us, we ſtudy perhaps to apply one promiſe, but for the reſt of the promiſes we lay them aſide, and do totally neglect them: we ſtudy to apply the promiſes of ſalvation, and of having redemption through Chriſt, but for the promiſes of ſanctification, for the promiſes to help us to perform duties, for the promiſes to ſupport us under the croſs, for the promiſes to comfort us in our way to heaven, for promiſes in reference to all ordinary things, we are not much in application of theſe: O but if a Chriſtian were believing the promiſes, he might ſit down even while he is here, and ſing one of the ſongs of Zion, though *yet but in a ſtrange land.*

The ſecond thing that I ſhall ſpeak to upon the application of the promiſes, ſhal be to propoſe unto you ſome rules that ye would make uſe of in the application of them; and ſhall name unto you theſe,

Firſt, Study theſe four things, one is the faithfulneſs and truth of the promiſes, that ſuch a thing is

the ſaying of him that is the *faithful witneſs*, *and Amen*: this was the practice of *Paul*, 1 Tim. 1. 10. the way how he was brought to make application of the promiſes was, 1. By laying down that concluſion, this is a faithful ſaying; and *Rev.* 21. from the beginning to the 6. verſe. where there are great promiſes made, and much ſpoken to the commendation of heaven, this is ſubjoyned in the 6. verſe, *Theſe are the faithful and true ſayings of God.* As if *John* had ſaid, all that I have ſpoken concerning heaven, will be to no purpoſe, except ye believe the truth of the promiſes, and this was the practice of *David*, 2 *Sam.* 7. 28. *thy words are truth O Lord*, he ſubjoyneth this unto the actual application of the promiſes. 2. Study the ſweetneſs and excellency of the promiſes, this was the practice of *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. *This is a faithful ſaying*, and then he ſubjoyneth, *and worthy of acceptation*; And this was the practice of *David*, Pſa. 119. 72. *I have eſteemed the laws of thy mouth better then thouſands of gold and ſilver.* O ſuch an opinion, to eſteem the promiſes here then thouſands of gold. It is Hetrodox amongſt the moſt part of you, that prefer the world before the promiſes of the Covenant: and it was his practice, ver. 103. and 162. *I rejoyce at thy word as one that findeth great ſpoil*; he had higher account of the promiſes then to divide the ſpoil after war. 3. Let the Chriſtian ſtudy the neceſſity that he hath of the promiſes, that there is no way of winning above that neceſſity, but by the cloſing with the promiſe, and laying hold upon it. 4. Laſtly, A Chriſtian would ſtudy the ſuitableneſs that is in the promiſe to anſwer their neceſſities, that if they be under need, there is a precious way of remedy manifeſted unto them by theſe.

The ſecond rule that we would preſcribe in the application of the promiſes, is, that ye do not expect ſenſible comforts immediatly after ye have believed the pro-

promiſe, A Chriſtian may apply the Promiſes, and yet want the joy and ſweetneſs that is in them; This is clear, *Pſal.* 119. 25. *My ſoul cleaveth unto the duſt*, There he is under much anxiety and much ſorrow; and yet he is a believer of the promiſes in the mean time, as the words following do clear, *Quicken me according to thy word*; he layeth claim to the promiſe, and this is clear in the 81. ver. of that Pſalm, *My ſoul doth faint within me*; There is much exerciſe of ſorrow, and yet he is a believer in the promiſe, *But I hope in thy word*; A Chriſtian after he hath believed the promiſe, he would put a blank in Chriſts hand concerning the ſweetneſs of the promiſe to be made out in its own time. What is ſenſe? It is the precious indulgence of Chriſt that he giveth to his own. I would preſs this upon you, propheſie nothing before your believing of the promiſe; but having believed, ye may ſurely propheſie that the promiſe ſhall be accompliſhed in its own time, and the word that he hath ſpoken ſhall certainly come to paſs: but as for ſenſe, as for quickening, as for comforting, as for receiving, ye muſt put a blank in the hand of Chriſt to diſpenſe theſe things to you as he ſeeth fit.

The third rule in the application of the promiſes, is, That ye do not build your Faith upon this, that the promiſes ſhall be accompliſhed, becauſe probability and reaſon ſeem to ſay the thing: I would ſay this to a Chriſtian that ye may oftentimes ſuſpect the promiſe not near to be accompliſhed, when reaſon ſaith, *Behold the word of the Lord cometh*, and that oftentimes the Lord is nearer when we begin to paſs a concluſion, the word is not at hand, and the time of the accompliſhment of the promiſes is not near: Certainly many times before Chriſt accompliſh the promiſes, he will learn us to be living above ſenſe and reaſon, and he will have reaſon to ſubmit to faith, and he will have probabilities to contradict the accom-

pliſhment of the promiſes;and when probabilities are furtheſt away,that is his time to work;this is clear in theſe two ſignal deliverances of the people of *Iſrael* from *Egypt* and *Babylon*, *Exod.* 3. 4, 5. and *Ezek.* 37. at the beginning. And therefore as a Chriſtian would not quit his grip of the promiſes,becauſe diſpenſations ſeem to contradict the accompliſhment of the promiſe and ſometimes cryeth out, *Why art thou become unto me as a liar,and as waters that fail?* So on the other hand, ye are to build your faith upon the promiſes and not upon diſpenſations, even when favourable,ſeeing that we know the way that Chriſt taketh many times to accompliſh the promiſes,is by contrary means to our apprehenſion;*His paths are in the whirl wind,& his footſteps are not known.* And may we not cry out,who can take up the ways of God,whoſe ways are more ſubtil than the *way of an eagle in the air,or the way of a ſerpent upon the rock,or the way of a ſhip upon the ſea*,&c.

The fourth rule that we would preſcribe unto you in the application of the promiſe, is, That ye would cloſe abſolutely with the promiſes,I mean,without limiting the only One.There is a limited cloſing with the promiſe , which is the frequent exerciſe of our hearts; we will cloſe with the promiſe, but with this reſtraint laid uponChriſt,that whenſoever we begin to believe the promiſes,al things might go as we deſire,& this is the great occaſion that we do ſo frequently reject our confidence, and do refuſe our hope, when God doth not anſwer our peremptory expectations.

Fifthly, We give you this rule, that ye would eye Chriſt much in the application of the promiſes. There is a three-fold ſight of Chriſt that a Chriſtian ſhould have when he applyeth the promiſes , a Chriſtian ſhould have a ſight of the boundleſs and condeſcending love of Chriſt ; that ſo he may be conſtrained to hope,and may be conſtrained to love. 2. A Chriſtian ſhould eye the faithfulneſs and unchangeableneſs of Chriſt,

Chriſt,that what his bleſſed lips have ſpoken, *he will alſo do*,and *what he hath ſaid he will likewiſe bring to paſs.* And 3. In the application of the promiſes, he muſt eye the omnipotency of Chriſt , that what he hath ſaid , he is able to bring to paſs. And O when ſhall we have occaſion to ſing that ſong, *what hath God wrought for us!* which was the ſong that *Balaam* ſung, who yet was but a profane wretch.

6. There is this rule that we would preſcribe unto you in the application of the promiſes, that a Chriſtian after he hath applyed them,he would be much in the exerciſe of Prayer for the accompliſhment of theſe promiſes ; this was the practice of *David*, 2 *Sam.* 7. 27. When God in paſſing many precious promiſes, *David* doth ſubjoyn that word , *Therefore have I found in my heart to pray this prayer* ; And we ſee in *Ezek.*36.37. along that Chapter,God is paſſing moſt excellent promiſes ; and yet in verſe 37. this is ſubjoyned, *For all theſe things, I will be enquired of the houſe of Iſrael* : And in *Jer.* 29. 10,12. where the time is coming when God would accompliſh *his good word* (as he ſpeaketh) that is ſubjoyned in ver. 12. *Then ſhall ye call upon me, and ſeek after me.*And *Daniel* 9. 2, 3. when *Daniel* knew that the promiſe was near the time of its accompliſhment , then *he ſet himſelf to prayer and ſupplication to ſeek the face of God.* I would ſay theſe three words unto a Chriſtian ; the ſmalleſt mercy that a Chriſtian meeteth with , if he can call it *Samuel*, that is, *The ſon of prayer*,and if ye can call it *Iſaac*,that is,*The child of promiſe*,he may then,and doth ordinarily receive much conſolation in that mercy. O but a mercy flowing to a Chriſtian through a promiſe,if it were but a drink of cold water, and a piece of brown bread,it will be more excellent cheer,then all the dainties of the Kings of the earth.O but to eat and drink, taking theſe things as the accompliſhment of the promiſes , this would make us eat our bread

with

with singleness of heart, and much chearfulness. And there is this, secondly, I would say unto you, when a promise is accomplished, and a Christian is not much in the exercise of Prayer in the accomplishment of it, one to a hundred if he lose not the sanctified use of the accomplishment of that promise. Ah, know ye not that a promise when it is accomplished, may be a curse to a Christian. That word is most terrible, *Mal.* 2. 2. *I will curse your blessings.* And the last word that I would say to this, is, that a Christian who believeth the promises, notwithstanding that dispensations seem to contradict it, that promise shall be made most refreshful unto his spirit, when it is accomplished. O but a christian that never had much jealousie, nor much staggering about the accomplishment of the promise, when it cometh, it will be most refreshful unto him: And believe it, there is not one hours entertainment of jealousie about the accomplishment of the promise, but it will impare the sweetness of the promise, when it is accomplished, except so far, that the transcendent and free love of Christ is seen in the accomplishment of them, notwithstanding of our misbelief.

The last rule that I shal offer a christian in his application of the promises, when ye meet with objections that ye cannot answer, but they do silence you; I will tell yon what ye should do with them, misken these obstructions and lay them by, This was the practice of believing *Abraham*, Rom. 4. 9. *He considered not his own body being weak, and the deadness of Sarahs womb.* The weakness of his own body, & the deadness of *Sarahs* womb were so strong objections in the way of the accomplishment of the promises; that he could not answer them; & the way he taketh to refute them was, *He did not consider them*; as it were, he forgot those objections and went about his duty.

The third thing that we shall speak to, in relation to the application of the promises, shall be somewhat for help-

helping a Christian that is standing at too great a distance to get the promises applyed.

First, A christian would be much in the study of these experiences of the faithfulness of God, and what others have met with, when ye begin to apply a promise, ye may be helped in the Faith of applying promises, by beholding these great records of the faithfulness of God that are extant. This was the way the Angel took with *Mary*, Luk. 1.36. where helping her to believe that promise, that of her should be born the Messiah; this is the way that he strengthened her. *Thy cosin Elizabeth is now with child, and hath gone six moneths, even she that was called barren.* And I shall only name these two places in Scripture which may help you exceedingly, and strengthen you to believe the promises upon this account; There is that word in *Exod.* 12. 41, & 51. It is a most remarkable saying, *At the end of four hundred and thirty years, on that same very day*, (there was not one day missed after the time that was set, was accomplished) *In that same very day they came out*, and this is marked in *ver.* 51. again: And there is that word, 1 *King.* 8. 56. where *Solomon*, when he is singing most sweetly to God, he taketh an observation of this, *Loe* (saith he) *there hath not failed one word that God hath spoken to you by his servant Moses.*

2. Ye would be much in the consideration of your own experiences, that you have in the accomplishment of promises formerly. This was *Davids* way that he took to strengthen himself to believe the promise, *He that hath delivered me from the rage of the Lion, and the paw of the Bear, he will deliver me from this uncircumcised Philistine*, 1 Sam. 17. 35 & 37, 46. And this was the practice of the Apostle *Paul*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 17, 18. *God hath delivered me from the cruel lion*: And from thence he subjoyneth, *And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work*: and this was his practice, 2 *Cor.* 1. 10.

where

where these three are sweetly knit together. *God hath delivered me, he doth deliver me, and he shall deliver me.* There is not one experience of this kind, but it preacheth that unto you, O believe the promise, and do not call in question his faithfulness.

3. There is that help, that ye study much the excellency of the promises, that is the most noble and excellent way to move you to apply the promises, according to that word, *Psa.* 119.111. *I have made thy testimonies my heritage for ever*; and the ground of it is that, *because they are the rejoicing of my heart.* The sweetness of the promises would engage our heart to apply them. And there is that fourth help, a Christian would study the Omnipotency of God, that so he may be helped to believe and apply the promise: This is clear in *Zech.* 12.1. where God going to pass many excellent promises, he ushers in that discourse with high and majestick descriptions of his power, in that he *stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him.* And this was the practice of *Abraham*, Rom. 4. 21. the way how he came to believe the promise, *He counteth him able* that made it, that he might perform it. Fifthly, For your help in applying of the promises, Study much the unchangeableness of Christ, and his faithfulness; know that he is the same, yesterday, and to day, and for ever. This was the way that *Sarah* came to the faith of the promises, *Heb.* 11.11. *She believed*, and the ground of it is, that *she judged him faithful that had promised.* There is not one act of misbelief that a Christian falleth into, but it saith, that God is not faithful, and that he is not true.

Now the last duty that we would press from this point, that Christ is the fountain of the promises, is, that we may have an high esteem of the promiser; even of Jesus Christ, *in whom they are yea, and Amen.* And I shall close at this time with this, are there not ma-

many here that have no respect unto him who is that *faithfulness and the Amen*; who hath promised us *himself, and all things*: and if ye will not take with the challenge, let your hearts but answer these two or three things. 1. Hath not the loss of things in the world affected your heart more then ever absence from Christ did? Hath it not? And can such a soul say, I have an high account of the Promiser? Is it possible, that these that wil mourn more under the absense of their idols, then for the want of him, that they can have an high account of Jesus Christ? I am perswaded of this, there are some Merchants, that the loss of their goods at the Sea, hath diverted them from their nights rest, and yet absence from Christ never divert them from their sleep one hour. O when did love to find out Jesus Christ; & to enjoy his fellowship, make you rise up in the silent watches of the night, & to pursue after Him. 2. Have not your souls delighted more on the enjoyment of the things of a world, then ever they did in the enjoyment of Christ. Is not this true, that the increase of wine and oyl, and of silver and gold, hath affected your hearts more with joy than ever Christ did.? and have you a high esteem of the Promiser? 3. Are you taking delight to entertain fellowship and communion with the Promiser? Is this true? when went you to your Prayers, but ye wearied ere ye went away? & have you a high account of the Promiser? Is not that the language of your hearts, *O when shall the Sabbath be over? and when shall the new Moon be gone, that I may pursue after my idols?* I would pose you with this, if there were no eye to take notice of you, would you not slight secret Prayer? would you not slight Family Prayer? We love not to serve Jesus Christ. I know there are Atheists here, that would love to go to Heaven without Faith, Love, Prayer, and Repentance, they would love to go to Heaven by a way that never one went before them. And now I shall say but this one

word

word to you that are the heirs of the promiſe, and have the bleſſed expectation of Heaven, whatever the world do, eſteem ye highly of him: O remember & comfort your ſelves in the thoughts of the bleſſed day which Chriſt (after he hath paſt the ſentence of condemnation upon the wicked) ſhal go in upon the head of the Troups of the firſt-born, he ſhall walk before as through the Ports of the new Jeruſalem having crowns of immortal glory upon his head, & then ſhal follow after Him his Angels, & then ſhall follow after Him the bleſſed company of the firſt-born, every one having the harps of God in their hands, and they ſhal be ſinging as they enter in through the Ports of the City, *Hallelujahs unto him that was dead and is alive, and now liveth for evermore.* O, to believe that day when firſt we ſhall enter in through the Streets of the New Jeruſalem, when we ſhall be cloathed in white robes, having crowns upon our heads? O, ſuch a day if it were believed, might make us often ſhake our glaſs, and *ſtretch out our necks*, (as the word is, *Rom.* 8. 19.) till once we ſaw that bleſſed day were approaching to us? There is no wearying in Heaven, the promiſes are now accompliſhed unto them, and they are inheriting the promiſes; when ſhal that word be accompliſhed, or when ſhall we have occaſion to ſay it? *Mark* 1. 37. *Behold all men ſeek after thee.* O, the word that theſe Diſciples ſpake to Chriſt: O, ſtudy to love him, ſtudy to believe on him, for, be perſwaded he is upon his way. And I ſhall ſay no more but this, that all the promiſes, that are within the bounds of this everlaſting Covenant, they are yea, and Amen, to an Imbraced Chriſt, and laid hold on by faith; ſo I ſay, all the curſes that are in *Deut.* 25. 27, 28. & all the curſes that are within the volumn of the book of this Covenant, they ſhall be yea, and Amen in a diſpiſed Chriſt, and not be laid hold upon by faith.

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SERMON III.

2 Pet. 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promiſes, that by theſe you might be partakers of the divine nature, having eſcaped the corruption that is in the world through luſt.*

SOmerimes the ſoul of a Chriſtian doth move in the paths of God, and in the way toward Zion *as the chariots of Aminadab*, when they are under the Soul enliving and quickning influences of Heaven, and ſometimes the ſoul of a chriſtian doth move in thoſe bleſſed paths as *Pharaoh* chariots, *they drive moſt heavily* when there is a cloud between the precious face of Chriſt and them: and we conceive, that ſound and ſpiritual exerciſe of Faith upon the promiſes would make Chriſtians motion more ſwift towards Heaven. We grant Chriſt hath three different ways of guiding ſons and daughters to glory: There are ſome that Chriſt carrieth to Heaven in a chariot paved with love, that all alongs their life, they are living within ſight of that promiſed Land, and are taken up with the refreſhing of heavenly joys; ſuch a one was *Enoch*, who ſpent his days in walking with God: there are ſome that Chriſt guideth to heaven in a chariot that is drawn with ſpeckled horſes; they have mixed diſpenſations of ſorrow and joy attending them in their walk, and they have a winter and a ſummer, they have a night and a day, and ſuch a one was *Job*. 3. There are ſome that Chriſt carryeth to heaven in a fiery chariot, that all alongs their life they are under diſtracting terrors of the moſt high, & are living perpetually to their own apprehenſions upon the borders of hell, and ſuch a one was *Heman*, whom Chriſt thus guided to heaven: however if we ſhall go there, we need not much diſpute the way how we came, *for he doth all things well.* And upon the other part, Satan hath three different ways of guiding

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ſouls unto everlaſting torment : there are ſome that Satan carrieth to hell in a chariot of deluſions, making them believe that they are ſtill going to heaven; and ſuch are the hypocrites in Sion: and I ſhall ſay, I think that chariot was never ſo filled as it is in theſe days. O fear that anxious diſappointment that many of you (it is like) will meet with! An hypocrite, he hath ſtrong hopes, he hath ſtrong idols, he hath ſtrong deluſions, theſe are his three attendants. And there are ſome that Satan carryeth to hell in a chariot of profanity & ignorance of God, *whoſe judgement goeth before hand*, and they are known that they are going there. And there are ſome that Satan carryeth to hell in a chariot of civility, whoſe Religion ſtands in this, *concerning the letter of the Law to be blameleſs*. And certainly, believing of the promiſes, and ſtudying to exerciſe faith upon them, is that which might prevent many of theſe dammable ſoul-deſtroying & murdering deluſions that are within ſome of our breaſts. There are three things in Scripture that are called precious: Chriſt he is called precious, 1 *Pet.* 2. 7. Faith is called precious, 2 *Pet.* 1. 1. *To you that are partakers of the like precious faith with us*; and the promiſes they are called precious, in the words that we have read, and Faith (as it were) hath two bleſſed eyes, by one of theſe it beholdeth Chriſt, and by another of theſe it beholdeth the promiſes, and fixeth it ſelf upon them. O chriſtians and expectants of Heaven, would you know what is the riſe of all the ſad things that have befallen you in theſe days? It is this, in ſhort, ye believe not the promiſes. O chriſtians, what is the reaſon that ye carry not your croſſes with patience? It is, becauſe ye believe not the promiſes by which your ſouls muſt be upholden in the day of your affliction. O chriſtian, what is the riſe of your little mortification? Is it not becauſe ye believe not the promiſes; for by them ye ſhould *be made partakers of the divine nature.*

O chriſtian, what is the ground that ye pray ſo little, and that you pray with ſo little ſucceſs? It is becauſe ye believe not the promiſes. A chriſtian, when he goeth to pray, he ſhould take theſe two things along; 1. The ſenſible convictions of his neceſſities: And, 2. The precious promiſes that is given to anſwer that neceſſity, the one would provoke fervency, and the other Faith. Are there not ſome here that knoweth not what it is to pray upon a promiſe, and that maketh you to pray to ſo little purpoſe. O chriſtian, what is the reaſon of your ſo much ſorrow, and of your little ſpiritual comfort? It is that ye believe not the promiſes: It is no wonder that your names be called *Marah*, becauſe ye exerciſe not faith upon the precious promiſes of God. I think without wronging you or any that are here; I doubt much if ever chriſtians had ſuch hearts, as the moſt part of us have: O what a heart is that, that can neither pray nor praiſe? both are alike myſteries unto them; What a heart is that, O chriſtian that can neither believe promiſe, believe threatnings, nor obey commands? What a heart is that, that can neither ſorrow for ſin, nor rejoyce in God? and what a heart is that, that can neither love Chriſt when he is preſent, nor can they long for Chriſt when he is abſent, and what a heart is that, O chriſtian, that can neither love heaven, nor can fear hell? and is there not ſuch hearts with us, even with us that are here this day.

At the laſt occaſion that we ſpake upon theſe words, we ſpake a little to the firſt thing in them, which was the riſe and original of the promiſes, holden forth in that word, *whereby* or *by whom*. The ſecond thing in the words, was the properties of the promiſes; and we told you that there were theſe four holden forth in the words. The firſt property of the promiſes, is, that they *are free*, which is imported in that word, *are given;*

given ; all the promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant being the precious and free gifts of God. Hence you will ſee that ofttimes the tenor of the Covenant of Grace runs upon that ſtrain , *I will give you* , as is clear, Jer. 32. and 39. *I will give one heart*, & *Ezek.* 36. 26. *I will give you a new heart*, and *Ezek.* 11. 19. *I will give you* ; it is the ſtrain of the language of the Covenant of Grace, to *give.*

Now in the ſpeaking upon this firſt property of the promiſes, to wit, *their freedom.* I ſhall ſpeak a little unto theſe two, the firſt thing ſhall be to point out unto you the way how a chriſtian may win to the diſtinct uptaking of the freedom of the promiſes, and then I ſhall from thence preſs ſome duties.

And in ſhort, as to the firſt , we conceive that a Chriſtian may win to the diſtinct uptaking of the freedom of the promiſes , by theſe conſiderations; 1. Let a Chriſtian caſt his eye upon the ſweet riſe, and ſpring or fountain of the promiſes, and there ye will ſee their freedom ſhining moſt clear: for what is the fountain of the promiſes? Is it not the boundleſs and everlaſting love of Chriſt : this is clear, *Deut.* 7. 8. where God giving a reaſon of all the great things that he had performed for them, he ſetteth down the riſe of it, *Becauſe I loved you*, ſaith he: & again the ground of this is; *Becauſe I loved you*; There being no reaſon of love , but love : and it is clear , 2 *Sam.* 7. 2. where *David* having received many precious promiſes, he ſetteth down the riſe of all theſe in that verſe, *For thy words ſake* , ſaith he, *and according to thine own heart , haſt thou done all theſe things to make them known to thy ſervant.* And it is clear, *Ezek.* 17. 18. where God calleth the time of entring into Covenant with them, *a time of love*; that love, it was eminently ſhining in that day, when God did condeſcend to Covenant with them : And hence ye ſee in Scripture , that the promiſes they are called by the name

name of *mercy* , Mic. 7. 20. *To perform the mercy to Abraham*, which is the *Promiſes*; and they are ſo called; becauſe mercy and boundleſs love is the ſole fountain and ſpring of all theſe promiſes. Secondly, conſider the perſons who have a right to make uſe of the promiſes. Muſt not the promiſes be free when the Proclamation is upon theſe terms, *Rev.* 21. 17. *Whoſoever will , let him come* , there is nothing to give you a right to the promiſes, but only a willingneſs to imbrace them , if ye will ye may take them. And thirdly, ye may read the freedom of the promiſes, in this, that any condition which is annexed to the promiſe , Chriſt giveth to the Believer ſtrength to perform that condition; It is known that faith is the condition of the promiſes , and it is certain that Chriſt giveth a Believer that condition as well as he giveth him the promiſe , *Philip.* 1. 29. *To you it is given to believe*; and *Eph.* 2. 8. *It is the gift of God* ; It is impoſſible for a Chriſtian to perform the condition, except Chriſt who is ſurety for him did perform it. Fourthly, ye may read the freedom of the promiſes, if ye conſider the time when the promiſes are accompliſhed, it is often at ſuch a time, when the Chriſtian hath been, and is under no very ſpiritual frame. Hence ye will ſee in *Ezek.* 16. 60, 61. That when the promiſes are accompliſhed , then God requireth *confuſion and bluſhing of face* , becauſe of their former ways, and *Ezek.* 36. 34. when the promiſes are accompliſhed, then that is the time when the Lord calleth them to *remember their own evil ways, and their doings that were not good* ; yea he will have them and all the world to know, *it is not for their ſakes that he doth this*; therefore he commandeth them to be *aſhamed and confounded for their own ways* , or the poſture they were in when he accompliſhed his promiſes : And if there were no other thing to ſpeak the freedom of the promiſes, but the tryſting of the accompliſhment

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of them with ſuch a frame, it were more then ſufficient; but beſides this, ſee *Davids* practice, 2 *Sam.* 7. 8. he readeth the freedom of the promiſes, from his own imperfections, *What am I* (ſaith he) *and what is my fathers houſe, that thou ſhouldeſt have brought me hitherto?* And even in the ſame Text, there is an Emphaſis in that word *to us*, *whereby are given to us*, as if the Apoſtle did ſay, to prove that the promiſes are gifts; I can bring no other argument ſo ſtrong as this, *They are given us.* Fifthly, Ye may read the freedom of the Promiſes, if ye will conſider and take up the infinite fulneſs and all-ſufficiency of the *Promiſer*, that there is nothing without himſelf that can perſwade him to give ſuch promiſes. Hence ye will ſee *Gen.* 17. 1. when he is making the Covenant with *Abraham*, he putteth it ſtill in the frontiſpiece of the Covenant, *I am God all-ſufficient*, as it were, to put off all thought of merit that *Abraham* might have, and that *Abraham* might be perſwaded of this, that there was not any imaginable perfection in himſelf, that could be the ground and riſe of ſuch promiſes. And there is that laſtly, from which ye may read the freedom of the promiſes, if ye conſider the greatneſs of theſe promiſes, if they were of a lower nature, then were it leſs to be wondred, if merit ſhould come in to plead for it ſelf; but when a Chriſtian ſhall compare himſelf, and the greatneſs of the promiſes together, he cannot but then ſing that bleſſed ſong, *Theſe are the gifts and donations of God, and what am I, and what is my fathers houſe, that thou haſt brought me hitherto?*

Now the ſecond thing that we purpoſed to ſpeak is, to preſs ſome duties upon you from this, that the promiſes are free, and we ſhall lay before you theſe three; The firſt, That ſince the promiſes of God are free, then as you would not deſtroy your own ſouls, be much in making uſe and application of the promiſes; Are not the promiſes your life? Did not

not all the Saints that went to heaven before us, go to Heaven, living upon the promiſes? there was not a ſtep of *Abrahams* life; but he walked with a promiſe in it; there was not an affliction that *Abraham* met with, but he took comfort to himſelf from the promiſes; and I ſhal remove theſe two miſtakes that are incident to chriſtians in the application of the promiſes, even from theſe grounds, that they are three;

The firſt is this, There are ſome chriſtians that will not apply the promiſes, becauſe they are under the convictions of their own infirmities, and of their own baſeneſs: ſo that when we preſs you to believe the promiſes, ye reject this counſel becauſe ye conſult with your own infirmities. This was the practice of *David*, Pſal. 22. 4. *Our fathers truſted in thee: they truſted and were delivered:* but he durſt not truſt in the 6. *verſe*, *But I am a worm, and not a man, I am a reproach among the people.* And it is that ſame divinity that is in theſe days, when we preſs you to believe the promiſes, becauſe of the great cloud of witneſſes that have gone before you, that believed the promiſes. O ſay ye, if I were like *David* and *Abraham*, I would believe the promiſes, but truely *David* ſaid that ſame that lived before you, If I were like my fathers, I would believe the promiſes, but I am not like my fathers. And therefore I would ſay to you theſe two words; 1. Are ye inferiour or ſhort unto *David* in holineſs, or neceſſities? We do not queſtion but all of you will anſwer, we are not inferiour to *David* in neceſſities, but in holineſs; Then ſay ye if we be not inferiour to *David* in neceſſities, then make uſe of the promiſes; for as we cleared the laſt day, neceſſities giveth a right in making uſe of the promiſes. 2. I would ſay, I am certainly perſwaded, that ſenſible neceſſity would cut ſhort many of our formal debates, in cloſing with the promiſes, neceſſities (as ye uſe to ſpeak) hath no Law, and neceſſity hath no

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manners. Let me ſay that to you who will not cloſe with the promiſes,that if ye were under ſenſible neceſſity, If Chriſt ſhould forbid you to cloſe with ſuch a promiſe , ye would cloſe with it though he forbid you , as the woman of *Canaan* did , there is nothing but ſenſible neceſſity will overcome it : neceſſity never diſputes its right , for it goeth over the belly of ſuch a diſpute,it preſently maketh uſe of that that its need calleth for.

Secondly , There is that other miſtake amongſt Chriſtians in believing the promiſes , that they want the qualifications annexed to the promiſes,and therefore they dare not believe the promiſes,eſpecially that promiſe of cloſing with Chriſt , they think they are not under ſuch a deep meaſure of humiliation,of ſorrow for ſin, nor under ſuch a lively apprehenſion of the excellency of Chriſt. And I ſhall ſay but theſe ſix things unto theſe that will not cloſe with Chriſt , becauſethey want qualifications, or at leaſt , have not theſe qualifications after ſuch a way. Firſt, Let me tell thee (O chriſtian that thus diſputes,) go between the firſt ſteps of a chriſtians way to heaven, and the laſt, and ſee if ye can behold a grave upon which this is written. Behold here lieth a man or a woman that came to Chriſt to imbrace him, and he would not receive them; Did ye ever behold ſuch a grave as this? And why then do ye ſo much diſpute? Will ye take a tryal of Chriſt;whether he will refuſe you if ye come, and if he ſhall refuſe you , ſure I am he will do that which he never did to any before you. The 2. thing I would ſay to ſuch , that the want of ſuch degrees of ſuch things , ought not to be a ground of your not cloſing with Chriſt ; for if ye had theſe qualifications that ye require, ye would maintain the ſame diſputs that ye do now; for when we deſire you to cloſe with Chriſt , ye anſwer , that your ſorrow is not come to ſuch a height as it ought , nor is your humiliation come

come to ſuch a height , as you pitch for your ſelf to come to. O Chriſtian,if ye come to ten times more, and yet ten times more, ye would have that ſame diſpute then which ye have now ; and the ground of it is this, the more that a Chriſtian hath real ſorrow, he will oftentimes be the more in the apprehenſion that he hath not ſorrow. Thirdly,If ye want the qualifications that are required in theſe that ſhould cloſe with Chriſt in the Covenant of promiſe, then come to Chriſt to get theſe qualifications. I would only ask at you , think ye to ſpin ſorrow for ſin out of your own hearts ? Think ye to ſpin humiliation for ſin out of theſe wretched breaſts of yours ? ye muſt come to Chriſt for ſorrow , as well as ye come to Chriſt for life. Fourthly, All the qualifications that are annexed unto that promiſe of cloſing with Chriſt and coming to him, they point out rather the qualification of them that will come, then the qualification of thoſe that ought to come : Ye read ſuch a command as that , *Come unto me all ye that are wearyed and heavy laden.* O ſay ye , I am not weary , and I am not under the burden of ſin, therefore I cannot come : I will tell you what is the meaning of that command, Chriſt inviteth thoſe who have the greateſt unwillingneſſe,to come and get willingneſſe : But withal it ſheweth this,none will come to get reſt from Chriſt, but theſe that are firſt weary, and that this is the Lords method of working,firſt to make weary, & then to eaſe,but no ſuch matter in his word. That firſt we muſt have a wearineſſe of our own making, or elſe he will not receive us ; now but when ye come ye will be weary,and he will receive you. Fifthly,let me ſay to you who thus diſputes , make your want of qualifications the very ground of your cloſing with Chriſt;I ſhal but in three places let you ſee this ſtrange arguing of Faith in cloſing with the promiſes: There is that , *Pſal.* 40. 11. , *Let thy truth continually preſerve*

preſerve me, that is, let thy promiſes be accompliſhed, and made lively unto me, which are my preſervation: and would ye know the ground and reaſon that he annexeth unto this; For, ſaith he, *Innumerable evils encompaſs me about, they have taken ſuch hold of me, that I am not able to look up.* He maketh his very want of qualifications, the grounds of his cloſing with the promiſe, and ſeeking the accompliſhment of it; and there is that ſecond expreſſion which is moſt wonderful, *Pſal.* 25. 11. *David* prayeth for the accompliſhment of that promiſe, *Pardon my ſin*, upon that ſame very account, *becauſe it is great*: And I ſhall give you a third place in which the arguing of Faith is moſt myſterious, *Exod.* 33. compared with *Exod.* 34. 9. In the firſt place, God denieth the accompliſhment of the promiſe *of going up amongſt the people*; And the ground he giveth of it is, *Becauſe*, ſaith he, *ye are a ſtiff-necked people.* And *chap.* 34. *verſe* 9. When *Moſes* is praying for the accompliſhment of that promiſe, *That God would go amongſt them*; he taketh that ſame very argument out of the mouth of God; Go up amongſt us; *For*, ſaith he, *we are a ſtiff-necked people*; God ſaid, he would not go up, becauſe they were a ſtiff-necked people, and *Moſes* deſireth him to go up becauſe of this. And there is this laſtly that we would ſay to you, that ſo much diſpute; If ye would have theſe qualifications that ye want; ye would ſtudy to cloſe with Chriſt by Faith; Would ye have ſorrow for ſin? then believe; Would ye have high thoughts of Chriſt? then believe; Would ye have humiliation? then believe; for believing is a mother grace unto all theſe.

The ſecond duty that we would preſs upon you from this conſideration, that the promiſes are free, is; that when the promiſes are given to you, and are accompliſhed, ye would ſtudy to be denyed to any merit in your ſelves, which ye may ſuppoſe to be the riſe

riſe of the giving or accompliſhment of the promiſes. There is nothing that a Chriſtian receiveth, but it is a fruit of infinite love: there is not a conviction that tryſteth a Chriſtian, but it is the fruit of infinite love: there is not one real ſigh for ſin, but it is the fruit of infinite love; there is not one blink of the precious countenance of Chriſt, but it is a fruit of infinite love: there is not the leaſt degree of hatred againſt ſin, but it is the fruit of infinite love; there is not the leaſt promiſe that is accompliſhed unto you, but it is the fruit of infinite love; ſo that upon your receipts from God, there is reaſon to ſing that ſong, *Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thee doth belong the glory*: And therefore, I would preſs this upon you, O Chriſtians, reduce all your mercies unto the fountain, and there ſit down and pen ſongs of everlaſting praiſe to him. Will ye but take a view of this, there is not one bit of bread that ye eat, that is within a promiſe, but it is a mercy that hath come running to you through the bowels and tender heart of Chriſt: his heart is the fountain of all our mercies, and they ſweetly ſtream out of that precious fountain; ſo that if ye had no other thing to commend your mercies from, but that it is a gift of the heart of Chriſt, ye may take it in your arms upon this account, and ſolace your ſelves with it.

The laſt duty that we would preſs upon you from this conſideration, that the promiſes are free, is this; Ye would be ſtudying to cloſe with Jeſus Chriſt that is promiſed and freely holden out to you in the Goſpel; O ſinner of eighty years old, O ſinner of ſixty years old, O atheiſt of fourty years old, and O ſinner of twenty years old and downward! I do here invite you, as the Ambaſſadour of Jeſus Chriſt, to imbrace Chriſt freely offered to you in the promiſes; yea, I do invite you by all the vertues of that noble *Plant of Renown*; by that everlaſting love that

dwelt in his precious heart, by all the ſufferings and wounds that he received, by his eternal glory, and by all the bleſſings and joyes of heaven, and by that love that ye owe to your precious and immortal ſouls, that ye would come and imbrace him freely offered to you in the Goſpel. And for the further preſſing of this, and for clearing of the way of your cloſing with him, I ſhall firſt propoſe ſome Goſpel myſteries and ſweetly agreeing contradictions, (if ſo we may ſpeak) held forth in Scripture, 1. *Come and buy Chriſt, and yet buy him without money*; that is, come and receive Chriſt, and ye ſhall have as unqueſtionable a right to him as if ye had bought him, that is to *buy without money*: ye have nothing to commend you to Chriſt but neceſſities, and neceſſities bid you go, and Chriſt biddeth you come, why then will ye ſit this call? 2. What a Goſpel myſterie is that, *Ye are to buy Chriſt, and he is above price*, there is nothing that we can give to buy that *pearl of greateſt price*, and yet we muſt buy him; then the meaning is, come, and buy Chriſt by faith, and by forſaking of your idols, this is all the price that he doth require for himſelf; and ſo he requireth nothing of you but what he himſelf doth give, or what is both your duty and advantage to forſake, and which is no gain for him to receive: Chriſt is not enriched by your hearts, and by giving of your conſent to him. 3. This is a Goſpel myſterie, that *we are to buy without money and without price*, & *yet to buy with a price*, according to that word *Prov.* 17. 17. there is a price put in the hands of fools, to buy wiſdom, and what is the meaning of that *to buy with price and to buy without price*? It is in ſhort this, though Chriſt be offered to you in the Goſpel freely, ye muſt not ſit down, but be active in cloſing with him; What is the price that Chriſt requireth of you? even this, that ye would forſake your ſoul deſtroying idols, and that ye would forſake your former

mer evil ways, and take hold of the preſent opportunity for imbracing him. And O! curſed ſhall the heart be that will not imbrace Chriſt; O but to have him one hour in our arms, it were well worth ten thouſand Eternities of the enjoyment of all things that are here below: Ye would never open your arms again to another lover, if once ye had him *between your breaſts*. O but a ſight of him that now is the eternal raviſhment of all that are above, would tranſport your hearts with joy, with delight, and admiration, above all expreſſion! Fourthly, there is this Goſpel-myſtery by which we would preſs you to imbrace Chriſt; *A Chriſtian muſt buy Chriſt, and yet he muſt have him freely*. Is there not an inconſiſtence do you ſuppoſe, between buying and having freely? But I would ſay this to clear it, Chriſt is both the ſeller, he is the wares, and he is the buyer; Chriſt he preſenteth himſelf unto your hearts, and he deſireth to ſell himſelf, and he perſwadeth and freely enableth you to buy him. I will tell you what Chriſt doth, he ſtandeth without our hearts, and within our hearts; he ſtandeth without and knocketh by the Word; and he ſtandeth within, and openeth by his Spirit; Chriſt, he both commandeth, and he obeyeth; both within doors, and without doors, and all this he doth freely.

The ſecond thing I ſhall ſay to perſwade your hearts to take Chriſt freely promiſed and offered unto you, ſhall be this; Will ye conſider that there is willingneſs in the heart of Chriſt to take you. I ſhall give unto you theſe ſix things that ſpeaketh out Chriſt his willingneſs to receive you. Firſt, Doth he not command you to come and receive him? and if ye could multiply objections throughout eternity, why ye ſhould not cloſe with Chriſt, ye may cut them all aſunder with his knife, *This is his commandment*: And doth he not command you, *Mat.* 11. 28. *Come*

unto me all ye that labour. And, *Iſai.* 55. 1. *Ho, every one that thirſteth come to the water.* Secondly, he doth regrate, and deeply reſent it, that ye wil not come. I think Chriſt never weeped ſo bitterly, as that day when he weeped over *Jeruſalem*, that they would not imbrace him, *Luke* 19. 41. *If thou, even thou,* at leaſt, *in this thy day, had known theſe things that belong to thy peace*: And *Joh.* 5. 40. *Ye will not come to me that ye may have life.* O what think ye can be the riſe of this, that Chriſt ſhould ſorrow, becauſe ye will not give up your hearts to him; doth he increaſe his gain when ye give him your hearts? No certainly, but he cannot endure that madneſs in you, that ye ſhould forſake your only gain. Thirdly, Would you do Chriſt a joyful turn, and make his heart glad? imbrace him; This is clear, *Luke* 15. 5. that when he findeth the ſheep that is going aſtray, *He returneth rejoycing.* Fourthly, I ſay no more unto you, would ye make all the perſons of the bleſſed Trinity to rejoyce, would ye make all the Angels of Heaven to ſing, would ye make all the Saints that are round about the Throne to exult for Joy? then give your hearts up to Chriſt, and cloſe with him in the Covenant of promiſe; according to that word, *Song* 6. laſt verſe, *Return, return, O Shulamite, return, return, that we may look upon thee.* Four times that command is repeated, *return,* and the great argument with which he backeth it, is, That all the perſons of the Trinity may rejoyce, that *we may look upon thee.* Fourthly, conſider but how he hath condeſcended to give himſelf at a very low rate: what will ye give for Chriſt? O ſinners, what will ye give for him? would ye give the world for Chriſt? I will tell you what ye will get Chriſt for; ye will get him for a very look, *Iſai.* 45. 22. *Look unto me, O all ye ends of the earth*: And think ye not that is a matchleſs mercy, that the thirty three years ſuff. rings of

of Chriſt, all the pains and tortoures of his heart, his being under the unſupportable wrath of an offended God; the fruit of all that ſhould be yours for a look, will ye deny that to Chriſt; Oh do ye ever think to find a more down-coming market? Yea, fifthly, doth not this ſpeak an admirable willingneſs to have you, he is to give you that look. It is impoſſible for theſe curſed eyes of ours, ever to give precious Chriſt a look, and therefore he hath promiſed, to give that to us, that we may give to him, *Zech.* 12. 10. *They ſhall look to me,* that very look ye are to get from Chriſt, & ye ſee it is within the compaſs of a promiſe. Laſtly, that ſpeaketh Chriſts willingneſs to receive & take you, that he doth not take the firſt refuſal. O chriſtians that are now in Chriſt, if Chriſt had taken an hundred refuſals from you, ye ſhould never have been in Heaven, but he waiteth for an anſwer, and doth not take us at our firſt word, according to that word, *Song.* 5. 2. *I am wet,* ſaith he, *with the drops of the morning, and my locks with the dew of the night*: He was long knocking at her heart, & ſtayed a long time there patiently ſuffering all the injuries he could meet with. And I would only poſe you, think ye that if on of the richeſt of you were ſuting a very poor woman, and ſhe refuſed you ſo many times, would your proud hearts ſubmit to take her; and yet how oftentimes hath the precious heart of Chriſt ſubmitted to many affronts, and refuſals that we have given him; I think if it were poſſible, chriſtians would wink, when firſt they behold Chriſt upon the day of their eſpouſals; For, I ſuppoſe there will be great diſpute between ſhame and love, deſire and confuſion; ſhame will make you to cloſe your eyes, becauſe ye have oftimes undervalued that Prince, and yet love will not let you cloſe them, deſire will put you to look, though reflecting upon your former ways, will make you bluſh and be aſhamed.

Thirdly, to perſwade you to receive Chriſt in the offer of his free promiſes, I ſhall but ſay theſe three words and cloſe, 1. Look to theſe excellent gifts that Chriſt bringeth with him, he bringeth Juſtification with him, and is not that an excellent gift. He bringeth Sanctification with him, and is not that an excellent gift? He bringeth joy of the Holy Ghoſt with him, and is not that an excellent gift? He bringeth the love of God with him, and is not that an excellent gift? He bringeth patience under ſufferings with him, and is not that an excellent gift? but why ſhould I name what he bringeth? He bringeth himſelf and all things, and what would ye have more? O, but for one ſaving blink of his face, it would make your hearts lay down your enmity that you have maintained ſo long. 2. O Chriſtian, that ye may cloſe with Chriſt, do but remember the happineſs that ye will have in imbracing him, I told you not long ſince, and now I put you in mind again: There is a ſixfold crown which ſhall be put upon your head; Would you have long life? then come to Chriſt, and ye ſhall have a crown of eternal life: Would ye have glory? then come to Chriſt, and ye ſhall have a crown of glory: Would ye have knowledge of the myſteries of God? then come to Chriſt, and he ſhall crown you with knowledge; Would ye have an eternal felicity, and an uninterrupted happineſs? then come to Chriſt, and ye ſhall have an immortal crown; Would ye have holineſs and ſanctification? then come to Chriſt, and ye ſhall have a crown of righteouſneſs: yea, he ſhall put a royal crown upon your head, a crown of pure gold; and then that word ſhall be accompliſhed to the full, *Ezek.* 9. 16. *Then ſhall they be as the ſtones of a crown lifted up, and as an enſign upon the land.* O what a day think ye will it be, when Chriſt ſhall hold your crowns upon his hand, and ſhall put them upon thoſe heads never to be removed again, here we are often

often put to ſigh out that lamentation, *The crown is fallen from our heads, wo unto us for we have ſinned*, but there ſhall be no more ſin to make our crown to totter. 1. I muſt tell you, There is a fourfold ſuite of apparel that ye ſhall be cloathed with ere long: ye are now cloathed with *heavineſs*, but then ye ſhall be cloathed with the garments of *praiſe*; And did ye ever know ſuch a robe as that? Is it not a more excellent robe, then the robes of Kings and Emperours in the Earth, to be cloathed with praiſes? Many of them are, and ſhall be for ever cloathed with infamy and ſhame. 2. Ye ſhall be cloathed with change of rayment, and ſhall be brought unto the King *in rayment of needle work*. O poor Laſs and poor Lade that ſitteth upon the dung-hill, that knows not what it is to have change of apparel; ye ſhall have it in that day, when Chriſt ſhall ſolemnize the Marriage with you, ye ſhall misken your ſelf. O Chriſtian, if ye knew your ſelf never ſo well, ye will be forced to cry out! *O, Is this I, is this I? that am now made perfect through his comlineſs.* 3. Ye ſhall be cloathed with the garments of *immortal glory*, ye that have *your foundation in the duſt, and dwell in the houſes of clay*, ye ſhall *then be cloathed with theſe excellent robes of immortality, and cloathed upon with your houſe from heaven.* And Laſtly, ye ſhall be cloathed with the garment of the *ſpotleſs righteouſneſs of Chriſt*. O ſuch a majeſtick walk as ye will have, when ye ſhall have a ſcepter in one hand, and a palm in the other, theſe robes put upon your back, and theſe crowns upon your heads, and then ſhall be walking through theſe ſtreets that are paved with Gold. 4. I ſhall give you this word to think upon, that there are five things that ſhall be your exerciſe in heaven; 1. Ye ſhall be conſtantly taken up in wondering: If it be not preſumption for us to think a little; What is the exerciſe of Chriſt, and the Saints that are above,

we conceive it is this , Chriſt is wondering at their beauty, and they are wondering at his beauty, Chriſt is looking upon them, and they upon him; and is it not true , that if Chriſt be now raviſhed with one of our eyes, *Song* 4. ver. 9. much more ſhall he be raviſhed when both our eyes ſhall be given to him, and ſhall eternally behold him, without going a whooring after other lovers. 2. Ye ſhall be continually in the exerciſe of praiſe, joy and light ſhall be flowing out eternally ; ye ſhall then ſweetly warble upon theſe Harps of God , and ſhall cry, *Hallelujah unto him that ſitteth upon the Throne* : There ſhall be no diſcord there ; there is a ſweet and beautiful harmony amongſt all theſe ſpiritual and heavenly Muſicians. O but to hear them, it were a Heaven, though we had not that bleſſed lot as to ſing with them. 3. Ye ſhall be continually taken up in the exerciſe of Love ; Faith is your predominant grace while ye are here , but Love ſhall be your predominant grace when ye are there. O! Is it not a myſtery to take up theſe ſweet emanations of Love and Delight , that ſhall paſs between Chriſt and you ? ye ſhall be infolding Chriſt, and Chriſt ſhall be infolding you. 4. Ye ſhall be continually beholding him. I think it is hardly poſſible for the Wife to remember her Husband in Heaven , though ſhe loved him as her own heart, they will all be taken up in beholding him that ſitteth upon the Throne , they will be thinking it too ew an object to be taken up with looking upon an her in theſe relations : all will be raviſhed beholding him , and one another in him , and for im. O the bleſſed exerciſe of theſe that are now entered within that City , and within theſe gates, whoſe Name is *Praiſe*. 5. Ye ſhall be continually taken up in beholding , ye ſhall be always knowing, and yet never able to comprehend the endleſs myſteries and perfections of Jeſus Chriſt. O ſuch a ſtudy!

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Is it not pleaſant always to be ſtudying Chriſt ? and will not theſe things perſwade you?

And now but a word more to theſe that will not have this free offer: If ye will not imbrace Chriſt and take him, let me tell you, I would not be in the ſtead of that perſon for ten thouſand worlds, if ye will not imbrace Chriſt, & take him for your portion, the ſtones of the wall of this houſe will bear witneſs againſt you, and they ſhall have a tongue to ſpeak againſt you, that ye have been invited to take him , and would not : ere long that day is approaching, and drawing near , when the Atheiſts and refuſers of Chriſt, they ſhall change their Faith , and they ſhall change their Love, they ſhall change their Fear, and they ſhall change their Joy, and they ſhall change their Mind, ye ſhall change your Faith , ye that are refuſers of Chriſt; for I know there are many that think they have cloſed with Chriſt, who never did cloſe with him; that faith ſhall flee away, and ye ſhall believe the contrary: ye ſhall change your love, or at leaſt your opinion of your love: ye think ye love Chriſt, but ye do not imbrace him ; I will tell you what will be your exerciſe , and I can tell you nothing ſo terrible , Chriſt ſhall eternally hate you , and ye ſhall eternally hate Chriſt , there ſhall be a mutual hatred betwixt you two for evermore. O that dreadful word, *Zech.* 11. 8. it ſhall then be accompliſhed to the uttermoſt, *My ſoul loathed them , and their ſoul alſo abhorred me.* And ye ſhall change your fear , for now though ye fear not God, nor reverence man, yet the horrour of G O D ſhall make you ſhake as a leaf , and ye ſhall change your light and your judgement. Ye do now undervalue Chriſt, and thinks him of nothing worth; when Chriſt is preſented unto you , *there is no beauty why ye ſhould deſire him* : But O think on that day when Chriſt ſhall ſit down in the clouds , and ye ſhall ſee his beautiful face, every ray of which ſhall

be

e able to captivate your hearts, if they were then capable to be raviſhed with the ſight. O what will be your thoughts of him? and if the bleſſings of a crucified Saviour come not upon you, then the eternal, unſupportable vengeance of Chriſt ſhall light upon your heads, that would not condeſcend to take him: ye ſhall be curſed in your life, ye ſhall be curſed in your death, and ye ſhall be curſed after death; What ſay ye to it? are ye content to take him? ye might bleſs the day that ever ye were born, if ye could once come to cloſe with Chriſt. Now to Him that hath the keys of the houſe of *David*, that can open your hearts to give him entry, we deſire to give praiſe.

SERMON IV.

2 Pet. 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious Promiſes, that by theſe you might be partakers of the divine nature, having eſcaped the corruption that is in the world through luſt.*

THere are three moſt glorious and excellent gifts that God hath beſtowed upon man, there is that comprehenſive gift of Heaven *Jeſus Chriſt*, who is ſo called, *Joh.* 4. 10. and ſure ſuch a gift as that ought in ſome ſenſe to blind our eyes, and make us look upon all things that are below him, as nothing. The ſecond royal Giſt that the Lord hath given, is the precious promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant, which are given to us thorow him: a Chriſtian that is united unto him by the blood of Faith, he may write his name above the head of every promiſe of the everlaſting Covenant, *this is mine, and this is mine.* His third precious gift, is the gift of *Faith*, which is that grace that maketh uſe of the former two: & we conceive that our little making uſe of theſe three excellent gifts, is the great occaſion and cauſe why theſe four moſt ſad and lamentable evils have befallen us. 1. The evil of a ſi-

a ſilent conſcience, that though *we be profound to commit iniquity*, and do *love a reward under every green tree*, yet our conſcience doth not ſpeak, nor reprove us, and if at any time they do ſpeak, yet there are ſome that are ſo poſſeſſed with a dumb and deaf ſpirit, they can neither hear what God doth ſpeak, nor can they hear their conſcience. 2. The evil of a fierce rod, we know not the voice of our rod, *and who is he that hath appointed it?* God doth not now open *our ears to Diſcipline, nor ſeal up our inſtruction.* 3. There is that evil of *ſilent mercies*, the mercies that we receive of God, we underſtand not the language of them: are not our mercies Barbarians unto us, ſpeaking to us in an unknown tongue? and yet we may ſay, there is not a rod, nor a mercy a Chriſtian meets with, but it hath a voice, if we did underſtand it. And laſtly, there is that evil which hath befallen us; and alace, this is the capeſtone of all, *a ſilent God*, who doth not hearken unto the voice of our cryes, but turneth about the face of his Throne, *covering himſelf with a cloud in his anger*, ſo *that our prayers cannot paſs through.* Alace, may not each Chriſtian of this time cry out, *call me no more Naomi*, *but call me Mara*, *becauſe the Lord hath dealt bitterly with me.* In ſhort, I think there are theſe two things that may be our lamentation upon the high places of *Iſrael.* Firſt, that we live without ſight of God. And, ſecondly, that we live without ſight of our ſelves, and all this, becauſe we live without ſight of theſe precious Gifts, Chriſt and his promiſes.

But now to the words, We told you, that in them there were theſe four things holden forth concerning the promiſes. 1. The Original and fountain of the promiſes, in that word, *whereby, or by whom.* 2. The properties of the promiſes, which we told you, were theſe four. The firſt was, that the promiſes were free, holden forth in that word, they are *given*;

all

all the promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant being the noble gifts of God. The ſecond (of which) we are to ſpeak at this time, is this, that the promiſes of the covenant, they are unchangeable, which is imported alſo in that word, *they are given*, the gifts of God being indeed without repentance; And as to this, 1. We ſhall prove the truth of the point: and for this end, conſider that place, *Numb.* 23. 19. which was a part of *Balaams* ſong, *Hath he not ſpoken it, and will he not alſo do it? Hath he ſaid it, and ſhall it not alſo come to paſs?* and Pſal. 89. 34. *I will not break my Covenant, nor alter the word that hath gone out of my mouth*: and the point is clear alſo, from the name that the promiſes getteth in Scripture, are they not called *the ſure mercies of David*, Iſai. 55. 3. and are they not ſometimes in Scripture called *Truth*, as we may ſee from *Micah* 7. 20. Thirdly, The nature of the Covenant proveth it; in that it is called *an everlaſting Covenant*, and ſometimes a *Covenant of Salt*, becauſe that Covenant is above the reach of alteration or putrifaction. And fourthly, It may be likewiſe ſhown from the conſtant experience that the Saints have had of the unchangeableneſs of the promiſes. This *Joſhua* taketh notice of, *Chap.* 23, 24. where when he was a dying, *There hath not failed* (ſaith he) *one thing of all theſe good things that God hath ſpoken*; and he is ſo confident of this, that he is forced to repeat that word over again in that verſe, and he taketh notice of it, *Joſh.* 21. 45. where he uſeth that ſame expreſſion again, *There hath not failed* (ſaith he) *one thing of all the good things that God hath ſpoken*; and this *Solomon*, he took notice of, 1 *Kin.* 8. 56. *There hath not failed one thing that God hath ſpoken unto us by Moſes*, and indeed, there is near ſix thouſand years experience that preacheth this truth, *the promiſes are unchangeable*, ſo that we may now ſay, *The word of the Lord is tried as ſilver is purified*

rified in a furnace of earth hot ſeven times; If there had been any falſhood in the precious promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant, ſix thouſand years tryal ſhould have brought it to light; but doth not every one of the cloud of witneſſes that have gone before us, leave this teſtimony upon record, *Faithful is he that hath promiſed, who will alſo do it*, his *promiſe is with the night and with the day*, it cannot be altered; the ordinances of heaven continue to this day, much leſs can this Covenant of love be broken or altered, only we would have you taking this Caution by the way, that there are ſome conditional promiſes that God paſſeth unto his people, which in the depths of his ſpotleſs wiſdom, he doth not accompliſh unto theſe who never fulfil the condition; ſuch was that promiſe that he gave to the *Iſraelites* in the land of *Egypt*, of their poſſeſſing the land of *Canaan*, who yet died in the wilderneſs. And hence is that ſtrange word, *Numb.* 13. 34. *Ye ſhall know my breach of promiſe, ſaith the Lord*, which is a word ſpoken after the manner of men, not importing any change of purpoſe in God, but only ſhewing, that becauſe they did not believe, and ſo fulfil the condition of the promiſe, therefore it was not to be fulfilled perſonally to them.

The ſecond thing that we ſhall ſpeak to upon this, that the promiſes are unchangable, ſhall be to propoſe theſe ſix golden pillars and excellent foundations, upon which the unchangeableneſs of the promiſes is built. And the firſt of them is *the Omnipotency of God*, that there is nothing that he hath promiſed, but he is able to effectuate and to bring to paſs; Therefore, 2 *Cor.* 6. 18. when God had been paſſing many excellent promiſes, he ſtrengtheneth their faith with this, *Thus ſaith the Lord God Almighty*; and no doubt, *where the word of this King is, there is power, and who can ſay unto him, what doſt thou?* O misbeliever of the precious promiſes of the Covenant; be aſhamed to

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caſt up your eyes to heaven above , or to the earth beneath; we think the Stars, the Sun, the Moon, and all the works of God, they may ſpeak out that to you, do not misbelieve God , but truſt in him , *that is wonderful in counſel , and excellent in working.* The ſecond is , the wiſdom and infinite counſel of God, he hath not only compleat ability to accompliſh the promiſes that he hath given, but he hath the depths and treaſures of knowledge , by which he hath contrived the way of the accompliſhment of ſuch a promiſe. Hence is that word, 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. that the Covenant is *well ordered* , which ſpeaketh out the wiſdom of God ; and then that word is ſubjoyned , the Covenant *is ſure*; yea, the Covenant of Grace is ſuch a thing , that there is ſo much of the art of heaven, ſo much of Infinite wiſdom ſhining in it, that it is called the *Counſel of God*, Heb. 6. 17. *That ye might know the immutability of his counſel.* The third golden pillar, is *the infinite love of God*, that though there be nothing in us that can put him to accompliſh the promiſes, yet he will take an argument from his own love, to make out ſuch a promiſe to us; that there is ſometimes (if not always) nothing in us, but that which may ſpeak forth delays of the accompliſhment of the promiſes; but when God can bring no argument from us, he can bring an argument from his own love , as *Deut.* 7. 7, 8. where giving a reaſon of the accompliſhment of many promiſes, and of his Love to them, *I love you*, ſaith he, *becauſe I loved you*; there being no reaſon that can be given for love , but love. The fourth is, *The unchangeableneſs of the promiſer*, that he is the ſame , yeſterday , and to day , and for ever, and without all alteration and ſhadow of change: Hence ye may ſee, *Exod.* 3. 14. when God is repeating many precious promiſes unto *Moſes* , He (as it were) ſtrengtheneth *Moſes* faith with this, *I am* ſaith

ſaith he, *that I am*, which we conceive to point forth the unchangeableneſs of God, that what he hath ſaid, he will certainly accompliſh in its own time , and though *the viſion do tarry, yet at laſt it ſhall ſpeak.* The fifth is, *the faithfulneſs of God*, and that he is one that cannot lie , but certainly will make out what he hath ſpoken. Love, it maketh the promiſes, the faithfulneſs and power of God accompliſheth the promiſes, and the infinite wiſdom of God chooſeth the moſt fit time for the performing of them. Hence it is ſaid *Pſal.* 119. 89, 90. *Thy word , O Lord, is for ever ſettled in heaven*, and the ground of it is in the following verſe; *For thy faithfulneſs is unto all generations.* Hence you may ſee, that oftentimes when God is making promiſes to his own , he putteth to that word, *I that ſpeaketh in righteouſneſs*, Iſa. 45. and *Iſai.* 63. 1. O ! muſt not the promiſes be unchangeable that are made by the Father , who is the God of truth ? Muſt not the promiſes be unchangeable that are received and merited by the Son, that is Truth it ſelf, and the *faithful Witneſs* , and *Amen*? Muſt not the promiſes be unchangeable , that are applyed by the Holy Ghoſt, that is the *Spirit of Truth* ? And muſt not the promiſes be unchangeable , that are made known unto us by the Goſpel , that is *the word of Truth* ? Was there ever any who could leave that upon record of God , that he was unfaithful in the accompliſhment of his promiſes. O what a clear ſight of the faithfulneſs of God ſhall a Chriſtian get , when he ſhall be ſtanding upon the utmoſt line between Time and Eternity , then he will ſee God faithful in accompliſhing all his promiſes unto him from firſt to laſt. The laſt golden pillar is, *The Juſtice of God*; His juſtice, it now putteth him to accompliſh his promiſes, mercy and righteouſneſs have now kiſſed each other: Hence is that word, 1 *Joh.* 1. 9. *He is juſt and faithful to forgive*; So that now the accompliſhment of the

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promiſes, is not only an act of love, but it is an act of juſtice alſo; We confeſs indeed, love and mercy maketh the promiſes, but juſtice and truth alſo putteth God to the accompliſhment of them. Hence is that word, Micah 7. 20. *To perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham.* Why is it mercy to *Abraham*, and it is truth to *Jacob*? It is in ſhort this, becauſe mercy made the promiſes to *Abraham*, but truth did accompliſh the promiſes to *Jacob*?

The third thing that we ſhall ſpeak to from this, That the promiſes are unchangeable, ſhall be, to preſs theſe ſix duties upon you from this point.

O Chriſtians and Expectants of Heaven, who have Chriſt in you, the hope of Glory, rejoyce and be exceeding glad that the promiſes are unchangeable. 1. This is a duty that is preſſed from that ground, *Heb.* 6. 18. *That by two immutable things we might have ſtrong conſolation*: There is exceeding much joy that may come to a Chriſtian from this, that the promiſes ſhall be accompliſhed in their own time. We conceive that the word *unchangeable*, it is engraven upon the head of many a Chriſtians mercies. Is not *unchangeable* written above the head of your promiſes? Is not *unchangeable* written upon the head of our bleſſedneſs? Is not *unchangeable* written above the head of our enjoyment of God? That day is coming when we ſhall have *unchangeable* love, *unchangeable* enjoyment of God, and all things *unchangeable*: And we conceive, that if theſe two were believed, the truth of the promiſes, and the unchangeableneſs of the promiſes, a Chriſtian might walk through this valley of tears with joy, and comfort himſelf in hope:

The ſecond duty we would preſs, is this, that ye would ſurceaſe, and give over your diſputings and carnal reaſonings about the accompliſhment of the promiſes, ſince the promiſes of God are unchangeable, ought not we with this to ſilence misbelief, and all that

that blind humane reaſon can ſay: This is preſſed, *Heb.* 6. 16. *An oath for confirmation, it is an end of all ſtrife*, Gods confirming of his Covenant by an oath, it ought to cut ſhort the diſputings of misbelief; And here give me leave to point out a little theſe grounds, upon which it is that Chriſtians doth ſo much diſpute the accompliſhment of the promiſes, and to let you ſee how all theſe grounds may be anſwered from theſe ſix pillars that were given of their unchangeableneſs.

The firſt is when diſpenſations ſeemeth to contradict the truth of the promiſes, the promiſe, it ſpeaketh one thing, and diſpenſations ſeem to ſpeak another, and this is the occaſion that oftentimes a Chriſtian crys out, *Doth his promiſe fail for evermore?* This is clear from the practice of *David*, 1 *Sam.* 27. 1. when diſpenſations were upon the top of the accompliſhment, and truth of the promiſes, then misbelief it ariſeth as a champion mighty to war, and cryeth out, *I ſhall one day fall by the hand of Saul*: And we conceive, that diſpenſations contradicting the truth of the promiſes, was the occaſion of his ſpeaking that word, *Pſal.* 119. 11. *I ſaid in my haſte, all men are liars.* And I would only ſay to you that diſpute the truth of the promiſes upon this account, that diſpenſations contradicteth them: Do but conſider this; God in his way is not like unto you; Would ye know the time when the promiſes are neareſt their accompliſhment, it is then when we can leaſt ſee that they are to be accompliſhed, the promiſes are never nearer their performance, then when we think that they are fartheſt off from it; And therefore let the faith of the omnipotency of God, uphold your ſpirit under ſuch a debate, then let diſpenſations ſpeak what they will; ye may anſwer all with this, *There is nothing too hard for him*, there is nothing too hard for the Lord. I grant this may try the ſtrength of the ſtrongeſt faith, yea, we find it hath made the beſt

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to stagger when they had no probabilities to tell them that the promises shall be accomplished, this was the ground of *Sarahs* misbelief, *Gen.* 18. 12. that when she heard that she should bear a son in her old age, she laughed within her self, and did as it were, mock at such a promise; and this was the ground of *Moses*, his misbelief, *Num.* 11. 21, 22. he did not see a probability that such a multitude should be fed with flesh, and therefore he did call in question the truth of that promise; this was the ground of the misbelief of that lord that is made mention of, 2 *King.* 7. 2. & this was the ground of *Zacharies* misbelief, *Luke* 1.20. But I would only say to you that do so much consult with probability in the exercise of your faith, these two things. 1. There is nothing too hard for God, this was the very argument that God took to convince *Sarah*, in the 14. verse of that 18. Chapter, *Is there any thing too hard for God?* And, 2. Faith is never in its native and spiritual exercise, till once probability contradict the truth of the promise, then faith, it is put upon the stage, then faith doth act; but as long as faith and probabilities think one thing, then the day of the tryal of the strength of faith is not yet come.

The second ground upon which Christians dispute the accomplishment of the promises, is their much disputing of their interest in God; sometimes a christian will believe a promise, & before the accomplishment of the promise come, their hope will be darkned, their interest in Christ will be obscured, and then they do quite their faith in adhering to the truth of that promise. These two are joyned together, want of the faith of our interest, and want of the faith of the accomplishment of the promise, as is clear from that word, *Psal.* 77. 8. *Is his mercy clean gone?* There is disputing of his interest, and presently this is subjoyned, *doth his promise fail for evermore?* Except a Christian can read his name in the ancient records of heaven, and

and can seal this conclusion, *I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine*, it will be a hard, and a difficult task for him, if not impossible to believe the promises.

The fourth ground of a Christians disputing the truth of the promises, is, their mistaking the way how the promises are to be accomplished, there are some that suppose that when ever they close with a promise by faith, there is no more but to enter to the possession of such a promise; but do not mistake it, between your believing the promise, and the accomplishment of it, there may be sad and dark days interveening, according to that word in *Mark* 10. 30. where Christ, passing great promises to his Disciples, He, as it were doth add, do not mistake me, that ye shall have these promises without trouble and affliction, *Ye shall receive* (saith he) *an hundred fold in this life with persecutions.* A Christian when he believeth the promises, he must resolve to have a winter before the spring time come, wherein the promise shall bud and flourish.

The fifth ground of a Christians disputing the truth of the promises, is, when the promises are long in their accomplishing. A Christian when first he meeteth with a promise, he will cry forth, *O believe*, but when time is taken for the accomplishment of it, then his faith beginneth to faint, and his hope beginneth to languish and give over; yea, sometimes Christians they fall into this faulr, when they believe a promise, they fix a day for the accomplishment of it; which, if God do not keep, but go over; then they immediately cry forth, *What is my strength that I should wait? and what is my confidence that I should prolong my days?* This is clear in the practice of *Abraham*, where the promise of having a numerous seed being given to him, *Gen.* 12. 2. the long time before that promise was accomplished in part to him, was the occasion of his misbelief, that he vented, *Gen.* 15. 3. *O Lord,*

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what wilt thou give me since I go childless. But ye must know that before the *vision shall speak*, there is an appointed time that ye must wait, according to 1 Pet. 5. 9, 10. *After ye have suffered a while*, then the promises shall be accomplished, and ye shall be made perfect.

The sixth ground upon which Christians call in question the accomplishment of the promises, is, The consideration of the greatness of the thing that is promised, when they compare it with their own worth and deserving, then they begin to dispute, *O shall such a thing be*, shall unworthy I, shall sinful I, shall self-destroying I, shall I that am *less then the least of his mercies*, receive the accomplishment of such a mercy? this we may suppose was one ground of *Abrahams* misbelief, *Gen.* 17. 17. when he cryed forth at that same time, when the Lord was giving him the excellent promise of an *Isaac*, *O that Ishmael might live*: he thought an *Isaac* such an excellent mercy, that he could not without presumption, expect the accomplishment of that promise; and in *Zech.* 8. 6. this was the ground of their misbelief, which God doth sweetly obviate, *If it be wonderful in the eyes of the remnant of his people in these dayes, should it also be wonderful in mine?*

The last ground upon which a Christian disputes the accomplishment of the promises, is, when in the time between their believing & the accomplishment of the promise, they fall into some gross iniquity, this maketh them exceedingly debate whether the promise shall be accomplished unto them; for since they have transgressed the Covenant of God, and have broken their purposes and resolutions, they cannot suppose God will abide faithful to them; and once accomplish his promise unto them; and the only way how to answer this dispute, is, to look to the faithfulness of God, & use that word, 2 *Tim.* 2. 13. *Though we believe not, yet God doth abide faithful, he cannot deny himself.*

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And now to shut up this second duty, that we press from the unchangeableness of the promises; I shall only say these two words unto you; 1. Assure your selves of this, that these accomplishments of the promises that come not through the lively exercise of Faith, doth lose much of their sweetness, much of their luster, and much of their advantage: sometimes a promise wil be accomplished unto a Christian, when he hath not been much in the constant and lively exercise of Faith in believing such a promise; but then the disadvantages that attendeth such a one, are not easily expressed: how often may he cry out, *The Lord was in this place, and I was not aware*: how little of God doth he see in it? how short is he in praises and rendering to the Lord according to the good he hath received? how negligent in improving or keeping the mercy, and how loath to lay it out for God, when he saith, *the Lord hath need of it*: and many things more of this kind, which may press us to be stedfast in believing. And, 2. O dispute less, and believe more, what profit shall you have of your disputings? and if ye would produce all your strong arguments, why ye should not believe the promises, ye may drown them in this immense depth, *God is unchangeable*. Let me say but this further, there are three most remarkable changes in a Christian, in his making use of the promises: First, Sometime he will believe the promises, and make application of them, and ere many hours go about, he will misbelieve that promise, which presently he believed. Will not sometime a Christian in the morning cry out, *I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine*, and ere twelve hours come, they will change their note, and cry out, *My hope and my strength is perished from the Lord*: Sometimes a Christian in the morning will cry out, *My mountain standeth strong, I shall never be moved*, and ere many hours go about, he will change his note, and cry out,

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Thou haſt hid thy face from me, and I was troubled. Secondly, Sometimes a promiſe will be to a Chriſtian *ſweeter then the honey and the honey comb:* Sometimes a Chriſtian will die and live upon the promiſe; Sometimes the believing of a promiſe, will be to a Chriſtian *as the valey of Achor for a door of hope*, that will make him to ſing, and yet ere many days go about, he may come to that ſame very promiſe, and it will prove taſteleſs to him as the *white of an egg*; ſo that he may cry out, *O that it were with me, as in months paſt, and in the ancient times*: And O where is the ſweetneſs that I found in ſuch a promiſe; O, it is gone, it is gone, and I am left deſolate. Thirdly, Sometimes when a Chriſtian will be believing ſuch a promiſe, and reſting upon it, he will (through the Spirit of the Lord) ſee much light and clearneſs in that promiſe, he will take up the *deep things of God* that ſhineth therein: and at another time he may come to that ſame promiſe, and it may be dark to him, ſo that his light hath evaniſhed: and ſometimes the joy of a Chriſtian in the promiſe will be gone, when his light that he had in it, may remain with him. A Chriſtian may come to the promiſe, and find his ancient light, yet not his ancient joy, nor his ancient delight. Therefore, if ye would have the promiſes always ſweet unto you, pray over them, pray that God might breathe upon ſuch a promiſe, and make it lively unto you.

The third thing that we would preſs upon you from the unchangeableneſs of the promiſe; is that which by proportion ye may gather even from this, that the threatnings of God are *unchangeable*; theſe two are conjoyned; yea, *Joſhuah* ſeemeth to infer the unchangeableneſs of the threatnings from the unchangeableneſs of the promiſes, *Chap.* 23. 14. compared with *verſ.* 15. and theſe two are conjoyned, *Zech.* 8. 14, 15. *That as I thought to puniſh you, and it hath come to paſs, ſo I have thought to build you up, and*

and it ſhall come to paſs. And I would from this, deſire you to ſtand in aw, leſt you come under the laſh of unchangeable threatnings of God; for know that as God is unchangeable in the promiſes, and there is not one word in all the everlaſting Covenant that ſhall not be accompliſhed; ſo likewiſe know, there is not a curſe in all the Book of the Covenant, but it ſhall be accompliſhed in its time: And know this likewiſe, that the day is coming when that ſad word, that is in *Hoſ.* 7. 12. ſhall be accompliſhed, *I will chaſtiſe them as their congregation hath heard.* And, O ye that live in this place, if all the threatnings that your Congregations hath heard, ſhall be accompliſhed in their time, ye may take up the laſt words of *Balaams* ſong, alace, *who ſhall live when God ſhall do theſe things?* And therefore, ſince the threatnings of God are unchangeable, as alſo the promiſes, life and death is ſet before you: and either ye ſhall be the object of the unchangeable threatnings of God; or ye muſt be the object of the unchangeable promiſes of God: And therefore, I would from this charge you, that as you would not be helpful to the deſtruction of your own immortal ſouls, you would not undervalue the threatnings that ye hear in your congregations, ſince there is a declaration paſt, that the threatnings in your congregations ſhall be accompliſhed.

Now there is that fourth duty that we would preſs upon you from this, that the promiſes are unchangeable, have an unchangeable love to the *Promiſer*; let this commend the *Promiſer*, let this conſtrain your heart to delight in the *Promiſer.* O what a bleſſed diſpenſation of love is this, that an unchangeable God ſhould make unchangeable promiſes unto changeable creatures. If the promiſes of the covenant of grace were as changeable in their nature, as we are changeable, there ſhould not one of us go to Heaven; but now it is the bleſſed deſign of love, and it hath been

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a bleſſed practice of the infinite wiſdom of God, that when he hath to do with changeable creatures, he wil give them unchangeable promiſes. And I would once invite you again, that you would come near and imbrace this *unchangeable Promiſer*; I ſhall ſpeak theſe five words that may perſwade you. 1. Chriſt is eaſily to be gotten if ye wil but take him, ye wil get Chriſt if you will but hear, yea, for one liſtning of your ear to his voice ye ſhall get him; according to that word, *Iſ.* 55. 31. *hear*, And what of that? *and your ſouls ſhall live*; is not this to get Chriſt at an eaſie rate? and as we ſpake before, ye will get Chriſt for a look, and is not that an eaſie rate? *Iſ.* 45. 22. *Look unto me all ye ends of the earth and be ſaved*; Have ye a deſire to take Chriſt, ye ſhall get him for that deſire; according to that word, Iſ. 55. 1. *Ho every one that thirſteth let him come, and he that will let him come*: Will ye but conſent to take him, ye ſhall have him, and what can ye have at a lower rate then this? ſhall never your curſed hands take the pen and put to your name to the bleſſed contract of Marriage? ſhall never theſe curſed hearts of yours cry forth, *Even ſo I take Him*, and do promiſe to live to him, and to die to him. O ſtrange, will ye not do it? upon what terms would the world have Chriſt, is it poſſible to have him without a conſent to take him? Oh, if ye would but open to him, he would condeſcend to come in into you, and to ſup with you, and ye with him; do ye but ſtir to open, Chriſt hath the Keys in his own hand, and he would help you to open. O what if Chriſt, the precious Gift of Heaven, the eternal admiration of Angels, that branch of Righteouſneſs ſhall be deſpiſed, being offered upon ſo eaſie terms, then curſed eternally ſhall be that perſon that thus undervalueth Chriſt, it had been better for him that he had never been born; curſed ſhall ye be in your birth, and in your life, and in your death; all the curſes of the perſons of the Trinity,

nity will light upon you, yea, believe it; O Wife that hath a believing Husband, in the day that the great ſentence of eternal excommunication from the preſence of the Lord, ſhall be paſt againſt the undervaluers of Chriſt, a believing Husband will ſay Amen to that ſentence, even to his wife that did thus undervalue that Noble Plant of Renown; and the wife upon the other part, will ſay with hearty conſent, amen to that ſentence againſt the unbelieving Husband, and the Fathor to the Son, and the Son to the Father.

Now there is this fifth duty that we would preſs upon you from this, That the promiſes are unchangeable, that ye would be perſwaded to make the promiſes your portion and your inheritance; What can ye want that will choiſe the promiſes for your portion? I know, our curſed eyes doth not love to make inviſible promiſes, and that inviſible crown, and an inviſible God our portion, we look to walk by ſight, not by faith. But oh, If you knew once what it were but to claim a relation to Chriſt! did ye once know what it were to have but Chriſt a moment between your breaſts, ye would cry forth, O! *Who would not love him who is the King of Saints?* who would not be content to quite all things that they might get Chriſt that noble Pearl of price?

And there is this laſt duty that we would preſs upon you from this, that the promiſes are *unchangeable*; read a lecture from this, O Chriſtian, even your miſbelief; God hath confirmed his everlaſting Covenant with *an oath*, with the *Bloud of his Son*, by the two great broad Seals of Heaven, *the Sacrament of Baptiſm and the Lords Supper*; and what doth all theſe confirmations ſpeak but our dreadful misbelief, and that we know not what it is to be reſting on a naked word of promiſe. I ſhall ſay no more, but deſire that ye wold conſider and take notice of theſe three; Firſt, Ye have been ſolemnly, and often invited by the Am-

baſſadors of Chriſt to cloſe with him, and to take him for your Husband and your Lord, and will you conſider preſently, that all the Angels in Heaven, and all that are about the Throne, and the three moſt glorious, moſt bleſſed Perſons of the Trinity, that they are witneſſes, and ſhal be to your diſſent, and are there not many here whoſe hearts could never be brought up to give a hearty conſent to cloſe with Chriſt, that is the great Promiſer, and who hath laid all the bonds that Heaven or Earth could contrive to gain ſinners hearts to himſelf: O precious Chriſt, what could he do to perſwade us to love him, which he hath not done; and yet that may be your name, which is in *Epheſ.* 2. 2. *Children of diſobedience.* Or as the word is, Children of *Imperſwaſion*, we cannot be perſwaded. Secondly, I fear if Chriſt himſelf would come from Heaven and invite you, and ſay, here am I, imbrace me, there are ſome here who would cloſe not only their eyes, but their ears, they would cloſe their eyes, leſt the beauty of Chriſt ſhould allure them, they would cloſe their curſed ears, leſt they ſhould be gained, and captivate by the ſweet enchaunting voice of that bleſſed Charmer, when he ſhould charm ſo wiſely. And, laſtly, will thou tell me, O Chriſtian and expectant of Heaven, what a day ſhall it be when all the unchangeable promiſes of God ſhall be accompliſhed? What a day ſhall it be when that promiſe ſhall be accompliſhed, *ye ſhall ſee him as he is?* What a day ſhall it be when that promiſe ſhall be accompliſhed, *Ye ſhall be made like unto him?* What a day ſhall it be when that promiſe ſhall be accompliſhed, *Ye ſhall know as ye are known?* O! are ye not longing for the day of the full accompliſhment of the precious promiſes of God, when ye ſhall ſit down and comfort your ſelves in the eternal and unſpeakable fruition of them? O let us long and wait till the day ſhall be when the voice ſhall be heard in Heaven, that *the myſteries*

ſteries of God are finiſhed, till the day when that voice ſhall be heard in Heaven, *Behold, the Bride-groom cometh, go ye out to meet him.* O how unwilling are we to leave a world. And how badly would we take up our reſt on this ſide of *Jordan*. I think if this were the night that that bleſſed voice were to be heard in Heaven, *Behold the Bride-groom cometh, go ye out to meet him*: ſome, if not many of the Chriſtians (that are ſo indeed) in this time, would cry forth, *O ſpare a little that we may recover ſtrength, before we go hence and ſhall be no more.* Are ye not longing to bring the King over *Jordan*, and to bring him home to your ſelf, and to have your heart brought home to him? O bleſſed, bleſſed are thoſe that are above, *Is not the voice of theſe that ſhout for victory*, heard amongſt them? Is not the voice of theſe *that ſing for joy, heard among them? Job* doth not now any more complain, *why doſt thou make me to poſſeſs the iniquities of my youth, and ſetteth a print upon my heels? David* doth now no more complain, *Why doth thy promiſe fail for evermore?* but rather doth ſweetly ſing, *How is thy promiſe fulfilled for evermore? Heman* doth now no more complain, *while I ſuffer thy terrours I am diſtracted:* but rather cry out, *while I feel thy comforts, I am raviſhed.* The voice of mourning is now ſweetly gone away, and the voice of Hallelujah and of eternal praiſing of him that ſitteth upon the throne, is now heard in the place of it: O, ſuch a day that ſhall never admit of a following night. Now to him that is upon his way, that will come, and ſhall come, and ſhall not tarry, we deſire to give praiſe.

SERMON V.

2 Pet. 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious Promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

THere are three cardinal and excellent Graces that are exercised and taken up with the precious promises, there is the excellent grace of Faith, that believeth the truth and the goodness of the promise; there is the precious grace of Hope, that with Patience waiteth for the accomplishment of the promise, and doth stay until the vision speak: and that noble grace of Love, that loveth the thing that is promised; and taketh exceeding much delight in the *Promiser*. If we may be allowed to speak so, we think these strange revolutions and times we live in, are another *Ecclesiastes*, which doth fully preach forth the vanity and emptiness of all things that are below God; and we do indeed conceive, that it is the great design of God, in the darkning of our pleasant things, and in marking *every gourd to wither*, under the shadow of which we use to repose our self, and in *famishing all the gods of the earth*, to bring his own to delight themselves in this invisible treasure, *the promises of the everlasting Covenant*, and in him who is the substance of them; and that since all things else are declared to be vanity, we might choise these as our own portion for ever.

At the last occasion that we spake upon these words, we were speaking unto the properties of the promise; and we told you that there were four of them holden forth; 1. *The freedom of the promises.* 2. *The unchangeableness of the promises*, of which two we have spoken unto you; and now there remaineth other two to be spoken to, to wit, that the promises are *exceeding great*, & that they are *exceeding precious*, a sweet and

and excellent, though a rare conjunction, greatness and goodness here kissing one another, preciousness and highness linked together by the bond of Union; And we shall speak unto these two properties together, and shall clear a little this thing, in what respects the promises of the Covenant, may be called exceeding great and precious; and we conceive in short, they may be called so in these eights respects; 1. They are exceeding great, in respect of the great price that was laid down to purchase them, there not being a promise of the everlasting Covenant above the head of which this may not be ingraven in great letters, *here is the price and purchase of bloud*; and no doubt this ought highly to commend the promises, that are bought at so infinite a rate. Must they not be great and precious things, that so wise a Merchant did lay down so infinite a treasure for the purchasing of them. 2. They may be called exceeding great and precious, in respect of these great and precious things that are promised in them. Is not godliness a great thing, and this within the bosome of a promise? Is not Heaven, an eternal enjoyment of God a great and precious thing? & yet this lyeth within the bosome of a promise; Is not the knowing of God as he is, our perfect conformity with God, our victory over Idols, great and excellent things? and yet all these are treasured up in the promises. 3. They may be called exceeding great and precious in respect of the great advantage that redounds to a Christian through the enjoyment of them: the promises of the everlasting Covenant, (if so we may speak) are the Pensils that draws the draughts and lineaments of the image of Christ upon the soul, it is the promises of the everlasting Covenant, by which *we are changed from glory to glory, as it were by the spirit of the Lord*, and as *Peter* doth here speak, the promises are such things, whereby we are made *partakers of the diviu*

nature. 4. They may be called exceeding precious in reſpect of that near relation that they have unto Jeſus Chriſt; what are all the promiſes of the covenant of Grace? are they not ſtreams and rivolets that flow from Jeſus Chriſt? Chriſt is the fountain out of which all theſe promiſes do ſpring; and can this fountain that is ſweet in it ſelf, ſend forth any bitter waters? muſt they not be precious things that have ſuch a noble deſcent? as the ſtreams of love flowing out from the Father to the Son, & from him unto us, as the pouring out of the ointment upon the head of *Aaron* which ran down the head unto the ſkirts of his garments. 5. They may be called exceeding precious promiſes, in reſpect they, or rather Chriſt in them are the object of precious faith; what is the meat upon which faith doth feed? Is it not upon the promiſes of the covenant and Chriſt the kernel of them; what are theſe things that faith taketh ſo much delight in, and is ſupported by? is it not the promiſes of the Covenant. 6. They may be called exceeding precious, in that they are the things that guideth and leadeth us to precious Chriſt. There is not a promiſe within the Book of the covenant, but, as it were, it cryeth forth with a loud voice, O come to Chriſt; the promiſes are indeed the ſtar that leadeth us unto the houſe where Chriſt doth ly, & there is no acceſs unto Jeſus Chriſt, but by a promiſe. Chriſt is to be found there, for he dwells within the bounds of the everlaſting covenant, & there he will tryſt with his people, and be found of them. And 7. They may be called exceeding precious, in reſpect that the Saints have found ſuch ſweetneſs, and ſuch unſpeakable delight in the promiſes. Did not *David* find a great ſweetneſs in the promiſes, when he cryeth forth, *The words of my mouth are better unto me, then thouſands of gold and ſilver*; Did he not find much ſweetneſs in the promiſes, when he was conſtrained to cry out, *Thy Law is ſweeter unto me, then the*

the honey and the honey comb; *David* in a manner, was put to a nonplus, to find out any ſuitable ſimilitude and ſignificant reſemblance, to point out the ſweetneſs of the promiſes, though we may ſee the chriſtians of this time in a ſpiritual feaver, they have loſt their ſpiritual taſte, ſo that they may ſay, if we may allude unto that word, 2 *Sam.* 19. 25. *I am this day fourſcore years old, and cannot diſcern between good and evil, can thy ſervant taſte what I eat, or what I drink.* They know not what it is to be overcome with the ſweetneſs that is to be found in theſe excellent ſtreams of divine conſolation. Laſtly, the promiſes may be called exceeding precious, in that the Saints have a high and marchleſs account of them: Hence that word here rendered *precious*, may likewiſe be rendered *Honourable*, which ſpeaketh forth that there is nothing that hath ſo much of the eſteem of a chriſtian as the promiſes. Would ye put wiſdom, or riches, or honour, or what ye will in the ballance with the promiſes, they would cry forth, what ſhould I profit to gain all theſe, if I loſe the promiſes? We ſhall ſay no more of this, but that the promiſes are indeed that apple, the eating of which would make us in ſome reſpect, (and in humility be it ſpoken) *as God, knowing good and evil*: The promiſes are theſe things that doth elevate the ſoul unto a divine conformity with God. And, oh, that this might be the fruit of them, the promiſes are as cords let down to ſouls ſinking in the *myrie clay; and in the horrible pit*: do but lay hold upon them, and ye ſhall undoubtedly be drawn up, and ye ſhall ſet *your feet upon the rock, and order all your goings.*

Now we come to ſpeak of the third thing in the words: which is the advantage and unſpeakable gain that floweth to a Chriſtian through the promiſes, holden forth in theſe words, *That by him ye might be made partakers of the divine nature*; which words

doth not hold forth that there is any substantial change of our natures unto the Essence of God; but only it holds forth this, that the soul that is taken up in believing of the promises, they arise unto a likeness and conformity to him in Holiness, Wisdom and Righteousness. And as to these advantages that come to a Christian through the promises, 1. We must lay this for a ground, that the fruit of all cometh to him through believing the promises, and in making application of them.

And the first is, That they do exceedingly help and promove that excellent necessary work of mortification: this is clear from the words of the Text; As likewise from 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.* And the influence that the promises have upon Sanctification, may be shown unto you in these three, First, They lay upon a Christian a divine bond and obligation to study holiness, that since Christ hath signified and testified his respects unto us, in so ample and large a way, as to give us such precious promises, we ought to endeavour to study holiness, which is that great reward of Love that he seeketh from us, for all things that he hath bestowed, and we receive, and this is the meaning of that, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. Secondly, The strength and furniture of a Christian for fulfilling and accomplishing of the work of sanctification, lieth within the promises: Are not the promises of God unto a Christian, as *Sampsons* locks, in which their great strength doth lye? and if once they cut themselves off from the promises, through misbelief, their strength doth decay, & they become as other men. Where must the Christian go to for strength? Is it not to the promises: is it not to the Name of the Lord? yea, this is the strength of a Christian unto which he must resort continually. And, Thirdly,

ly, the promises of God they hold forth that unspeakable reward that attendeth that Christian that shall study holiness. There are several promises of the everlasting Covenant, that cryeth forth to the Christian, to him that overcometh wil this promise be accomplished, to him that overcometh wil this truth be fulfilled, and this doth exceedingly provoke a Christian to wrestle with all his discouragements he meeteth with in the way, he burieth all his anxieties within the circle of his immortal Crown, which he hopeth for, and seeth in the promise, and his hope maketh him dispense with his wants, his expectation maketh him overcome his fears, and his looked for joy, maketh him to dispense with his sorrows.

The second advantage, is, That the faith of the promises do help a Christian to a spiritual and heavenly performance of the duty of prayer, and withal, maketh him delight in the performance of it: this is clear from 2 *Sam.* 7. 27. where *David* believing the promises, it is subjoyned, *He found in his heart to pray that prayer unto God*; and if any will look into the words of that prayer, they will see them running in a Heavenly and spiritual strain, speaking him one much acquainted with God, and under most high and majestick apprehensions of his Glory; and is clear also, Psal. 119. 147. *I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cryed*; & as if *David* had said, would you know what made me thus fervent, diligent in prayer, It was that, I hoped in his Word; and hence it is, that he hath so many prayers in that *Psalm*, all were occasioned through the faith of the promises, as for instance, when he cryed forth, *Quicken me according to thy word, be merciful unto me according to thy word.* We conceive the faith of the promises helpeth a Christian in his prayer to these four divine ingredients of that duty. 1. It maketh him to pray with faith: when once he buildeth his prayer upon the promises,

then

then he ventureth his prayer with much confidence of hope, according to that word, *Psa.* 65. 3. where ye may see a man believing, & praying when he is believing, and expressing his confidence most strangely in these words, *As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away*, it is not said, *thou wilt purge them away*, or we desire that thou should purge them away, but thou *shalt*, which speaketh forth both the confidence of faith, and the boldness of faith. A Christian that believeth the promises, he can take the promise in his hand, and present it unto God, and say, fulfil this promise, since thou wilt not deny thy Name, but art faithful. 2. It maketh a Christian pray with much humility, for when he doth understand that there is nothing that he hath but it is the fruit, & accomplishment of a promise, he doth not boast as those that have received, but walketh humbly under his enjoyments: this is clear, *Gen.* 31. 10. where we may see *Jacob* speaking to God with much humility, & in the ninth verse, he is speaking to God in much Faith. And, 3. It maketh a Christian pray with much love: would ye know the great ground that we are so remiss in the exercise of love in prayer, it is because we build not our prayers upon the promises. And, 4. It helpeth a Christian to pray with much fervency; when was it that *David* cryed to God? was it not when he was believing the promise that was past to him of old, we would not plead with God with such remisness, if we did believe the promises that are within the Covenant.

The third advantage is, That the faith of the promises doth sometimes uphold a Christian under his spiritual disertions and tentations. Is it not certain, that sometimes he hath been ready to draw that conclusion, I am cast out of his sight, and shall no more behold him in the land of the living? when a promise that hath been born in upon his spirit, hath supported him and made him to change his song, and to invert his

his conclusion. This is clear from *Psal.* 94. 18. when I said, *my foot slippeth*, there is the conclusion of misbelief and dispair, yet thy mercy, O Lord, *did hold me up*, there is the gate at which Faith doth bring in consolation, not from by-gone experiences only; but certainly from that which he found in some precious promises that was born in upon his spirit: Many excellent cords of love hath Christ let down unto a soul, when they have been going down into the depths, and the weeds have been wrapt about their heads: it is clear likewise from *Psal.* 119. 81. *My soul fainteth for thy salvation*: as if *David* had said, I am in hazard to give over my hope & to break my confidence: And would ye know what was it that supported me under such an estate, I hoped in thy word, Hath not this oftentimes been the song of a christian in their darkest night, *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts do delight my soul*: Faith will see a morning approaching in the time of the greatest trouble, and no doubt that promise that upholdeth a christian in their doubting and most misbelieving condition, the lively impressions of that promise will remain a long time; and when first it is born in upon their spirits, they will see no smal love shining forth in carving out such a promise to suit with such a Providence as they are (it may be) meeting with for the time.

The fourth advantage in believing the promise, is, that thereby we have an excellent help to patience, and divine submission under our saddest outward afflictions: this is clear from *Psal.* 27. 13. *I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living*: and from *Psal.* 119. 49, 50. where *David* telling his exercise in the 49. *I hope*, saith he, *in thy word*, immediately he subjoyned; *This is my comfort in mine afflictions*, as if he had said, if I had not had the promises to be my comforters,

forters, I had ſit alone and keept ſilence, & ſhould have remained without comfort in the day of my adverſity: and verſe 92. *unleſs thy law had been my delight, I ſhould have periſhed in mine afflictions*; & we conceive in ſhort, the influences which Faith upon the promiſes hath upon the patient bearing of the croſs, may be ſhown unto you in theſe two particulars; Firſt, faith it is an excellent Prophet, that always propheſieth unto us good things, would ye enquire at faith at your midnight of affliction, what is its opinion of God and of your own eſtate; Faith would ſweetly reſolve you thus, *Wait on God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him for the health of his countenance.* Faith knoweth not what it is to have a wrong conſtruction of God; and therefore it is the noble interpreter of a Chriſtians croſs. If ſenſe, reaſon, and miſbelief interpret your croſs, they will make you cry out unto God, *Why art thou become unto me as an enemy*, or *as a liar, & as waters that fail?* but if faith, that noble interpreter do interpret your croſſes, it will make you cry out, *I know the thoughts of his heart, that they are thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give me an expected end.* Faith letteth a Chriſtian ſee a bleſſed outgate and iſſue of all the ſad diſpenſations that he meeteth with. Faith, that is its divinity; I ſow in tears, but I reap in joy. *weeping it may be at the evening*, ſaith Faith, *but joy ſhall come in the morning.* Secondly, it affordeth unto a chriſtian ſuch ſoul refreſhing conſolation in the midſt of their afflictions, that in a manner they forget their ſorrows, *as waters that paſs away*; this *David* doth divinely aſſert, in *Pſa.* 119.50. *This is my comfort in affliction*: The faith of the promiſes are indeed that tree, which being caſt into our waters of *Marah, they will make them immediatly become ſweet.*

The fifth advantage is, that the faith of the promiſes doth help a chriſtian to a greater diſtance with the world, and to live as a pilgrim, as is clear from *Heb.* 12. 13. where theſe two are ſweetly linked together

gether, there is the imbracing of the promiſes by Faith, and confeſſing, *that they were ſtrangers, and pilgrims here on earth.* And we ſhall ſhow the influence that faith hath upon this, in theſe three. 1. It maketh a chriſtian ſee the end of all perfection here, and that there is nothing within the Glob of the world, that *is not vanity and vexation of ſpirit.* Faith is that proſpect through which a Chriſtian hath moſt clear diſcoveries of the vanity of all things, and this doth exceedingly help him to live as a pilgrim. 2. It letteth a Chriſtian ſee the endleſs perfections of heaven, and bringeth it within ſight of the Immenſe and everlaſting hope, and this maketh him to live as a pilgrim, & to declare plainly that he *ſeeketh a countrey.* And, 3. It doth exceedingly help him forward in that bleſſed work, of weaning of affections from all things that are here; would ye know where a believers heart is? it is in heaven; Would ye know where his thoughts are? they are in heaven; Would ye know where his converſation is? it is in Heaven, Would ye know where his hope is? It is in Heaven; his treaſure is in Heaven, and therefore his heart and converſation is there, *And Chriſt in him is the hope of glory*; and Indeed, more faith of the promiſes would conſtrain us all to ſubſcribe that *Confeſſion of Faith*, that is in *Heb.* 11. 13.

The ſixth advantage that attendeth the believing of the promiſes, is, that it is the mother of much ſpiritual joy and divine conſolation, and maketh a Chriſtian to be much in the exerciſe of praiſe, this is clear from Pſal. 71. 14. *But I will hope continually*, and then immediatly is ſubjoyned, *And will yet praiſe him more and more*, as likewiſe from *Rom.* 15. 13. and from 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. If a man would have his way to heaven made pleaſant, and while they are ſitting by the rivers of *Babel*, would be admitted to *ſing one of the ſongs of Zion*; then ought they to believe the promiſes,

miſes, and *choiſe them as their heritage for ever*: and then he may ſing in hope, and praiſe in expectation, though he have but little in hand for the preſent: indeed when he looketh to his poſſeſſion, there will not be ſo much matter of rejoicing, but when he looketh upon his hopes and his expectations, he may be conſtrained to cry forth, *Awake up, O my Glory, I my ſelf will awake early.*

The ſeventh advantage is, That the faith of the promiſes, is a notable mean to attain unto ſpiritual life: this is clear from 38. 16. *By all theſe things*, ſaith *Ezekiah, do men live* (ſpeaking of the promiſes) *and in all theſe things is the life of my ſpirit.* As likewiſe from *Pſa.* 119. 50. *Thy words*, ſaith *David hath quickened me.* O what ſpiritual and divine life doth attend that Chriſtian that is much in the exerciſe of faith upon the promiſes: and what is the great occaſion that our hearts are oftentimes dying within us like a ſtone, and we are like unto thoſe that are free among the dead? Is it not becauſe we do not make uſe of the promiſes?

Eighthly, There is that advantage, that faith of the promiſes it maketh a Chriſtian have an eſteem of the thing that is promiſed. What is the reaſon that we write this above the head of the great things of the everlaſting covenant, this is a *Zoar*, a little one? Is it not becauſe we do not believe? great things ſometimes to us have no beauty, and there is no comlineſs that appeareth in them why they ſhould be deſired; but if we had ſo much faith as *a grain of muſtard ſeed*, we would cry forth, How excellent are theſe things that are purchaſed to the ſaints, and how eternally are they made up, that have a right but of one line of the everlaſting Covenant, *that is well ordered in all things and ſure.*

And ninthly, The faith of the promiſes is the door at which the accompliſhment of the promiſes doth enter in: according to that word, *Luke* 1. 45. *Bleſſed are they that believe, for there ſhall be a performance of theſe things that are ſpoken of the Lord unto them.* If we were more in waiting for the accompliſhment of the promiſes, *The viſion ſhould ſpeak and ſhould not tarry*; And no doubt a mercy coming to us as the fruit and performance of a promiſe, will make it an exceeding refreſhful thing; When a Chriſtian getteth leave to ſing that ſong which is in *Iſ.* 25. 9. *Lo this is our God we have waited for him, and he will come and ſave us*, and when a mercy is the fruit and accompliſhment of the promiſe, there is a beautiful luſtre and dye upon that mercy, which no art could ſet on, but only the finger of the love of God. The ſmalleſt mercy then becometh a matchleſs myſtery of love, and the moſt matchleſs myſteries of Love without the exerciſe of Faith, they become as things that are contemptible in our eyes, and we do not value nor praiſe them. Faith maketh our thoughts to aſcend, and misbelief makes our thoughts to deſcend, in relation to the mercies of heaven.

Laſtly, Beſides all theſe advantages, we have theſe two mentioned in the Text, 1. That by them we are made partakers of the divine nature, & are brought up unto that bleſſed conformity with God, which we had loſt in the fall. 2. That by them we eſcape the corruption in the world through luſt. I intend not particularly to open up the nature of theſe things at this time, becauſe I am only to ſpeak to the exerciſe of faith in the promiſes. But O what excellent mercies are theſe, to get on the beauty of the Image of God, & to get off theſe ugly defilements which were the image of Satan upon our ſouls. O how ſhould this commend the promiſes unto us, that by faith in them we do all *behold with open face, as in a glaſs, the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, as it were by the Spirit of the Lord.*

Now

Now that which secondly, we shall speak to, shall be the advantages that results to a Christian from a spiritual observation of the Lords accomplishing his promises; for here ye see in the text, the Apostle maketh an observation of these excellent things that are the fruit of these precious promises, when they are accomplished. And the first advantage is, That it stampeth the soul of a believer with most divine impressions of love, this is clear, *Is.* 38. 15. where *Hezekiah* cryeth out, *what shall I say, he hath spoken it himself, and hath done it*, being as it were, astonished and overcome with the apprehensions of the condescendency of God, he is put to a nonplus, and to, *what shall I say*, *Psal.* 41. 8, 9. *As we have heard*, (saith *David*) *so have we seen in the City of the Lord of hosts*, that is according to his promise, we have had suitable performance; and he subjoyneth, *verse* 9. that which was both their exercise and their advantage, *we have thought of thy loving kindness, O God, in the midst of the temple*, as it were, the observation of the performance of the promise, made their thoghts wholly to be taken up with the love of God: and no doubt, there is more love in performing one promise, then etenity were sufficient to make a comentary upon. It is one wonder of condescendency, that God should obliege and bind himself to us by promises: and another depth of wonderful love that he should perform these bonds and answer his words with performance.

The second advantage is, that the observing of accomplishment of promises doth bring into the soul new discoveries of God; this is clear, *Exod.* 6. 5. where God thus speaketh to *Moses*, *I was known* (saith he) *unto Abraham, and unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of the Almighty, but by the name of Jehovah was I not known to them*, that is, by the name of giving an accomplishment unto my promises, that Name was not discovered unto them, but should be made

made known unto their posterity, in the day when his promises shall pass into performances, and hence it is also, that when the Lord is speaking of the accomplishment of great promises, he doth so often in the Scripture subjoyn that word, *Ye shall know that I am Jehovah, or the Lord*, Isai. 49. 23. 52. and 60. 16. and indeed we daily find it so, for, is not every accomplishment of a promise, a new discovery of the *Wisdom of God*, that shineth in the suitable tyming of the accomplishment of a promise? is not every accomplishment of a promise a new discovery of the *faithfulness of God*, that he will not alter that which hath gone out of his mouth: and is not every performance of the promise a new discovery of the *love of God*, that he desireth to magnifie his mercies above al his works and a new discovery of the *power and omnipotency of God*, that can bring forth the performance of his promise, notwithstanding of all the things that are in the way, *yea, make things that are not to be, and bringeth to nought things that are.*

The third advantage is, That it helpeth a Christian to have high apprehensions, and majestick uptakings of God; This is clear, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. compared with *verse* 17. where *Paul* closing with that promise, *That Christ came in the world to save sinners*, and beholding the accomplishment of it, In himself, his heart (as it were) is elevated within him, and he cryeth forth, *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever*, Amen. There is an Emphasis in that word, *Now*; as if *Paul* had said, I could never praise and extoll him till now, and I am so much bound to Christ that I will not delay this exercise one moment, now I will bless him, and it is clear from *Micah* 7. 18. where the accomplishment of the promises that are there, made the Church cry out, *who is like unto thee?* he became matchless unto them, through

through the performance of the promiſes. And ſo we conceive that theſe who are much in ſpiritual obſervation of the performance of the promiſes, they will ſee precious draughts of the Majeſty of God engraven upon them ; ſo that they will be conſtrained to cry out, that he above *is mighty, that his Name is Jehovah, and in him is everlaſting ſtrength*, upon which we ought to rely in our greateſt ſtraits.

The fourth advantage is, The obſervation of the accompliſhment of the promiſes will help a Chriſtian when he is redacted unto new ſtraits, to be much in the exerciſe of Faith upon God ; his former experience will produce hope in his ſoul; for there is not one diſcovery of the faithfulneſs of God , but hath a voice, and cryeth out, *O believe him* who is able to give a clear beeing unto his word : This is clear from *Pſ.* 56. at the cloſe , *Thou haſt delivered my ſoul from death*, ſaith *David*, and then he ſubjoyneth, *Wilt thou not deliver my feet from falling?* that is, I am certainly perſwaded, thou wilt likewiſe perform that word unto me, and from *Pſ.* 37. 2, 3. he giveth that title unto God, *ver.* 2. that he *performeth all things for him*, and then he doth ſubjoyn, *He ſhall ſend from heaven and ſave me*; and (by the way) the ſoul that can give God that title and ſtile, *that he performeth all things for them*, that ſoul muſt of neceſſity be in a choiſe and excellent ſtate; And the point is likewiſe clear, from 2 *Cor.* 1. 10. where *Paul* ſaith, *God hath delivered me, and he doth deliver me*, and from hence he draweth that concluſion of Faith, *And he will yet deliver me*; We confeſs ſometimes our former experience of the faithfulneſs of God , they do not ſupport the faith when we are redacted unto new difficulties, which is either occaſioned through the greatneſs of the ſtraits that we are now put to, (in our apprehenſions) above that which we were put to before : ſo that though God did deliver

ver us when we were *running with foot-men*, yet we have no faith to believe that he ſhall deliver us when we are about to *contend with horſes*; or elſe it is, throgh the unfaithfulneſs of our walk, in not anſwering the precious diſpenſations of Chriſt , in accompliſhment of his promiſes , for this maketh us that we cannot with boldneſs make uſe of his Word when we are brought unto a new ſtrait , a guilty conſcience is the mother of misbelief.

The fifth advantage is, The accompliſhment of the promiſes doth occaſion much ſpiritual joy , and rejoycing unto his own. We told you, the giving of the promiſes occaſioneth joy, and when the promiſes travelleth in birth and bringeth forth, that occaſioneth much more ſpiritual joy ; this is clear from *Pſ.* 28. 7. *The Lord is my ſtrength and my ſhield, my heart truſted in him, and I was helped.* And he draweth this excellent concluſion from it, *Therefore my heart greatly rejoyceth, and with my ſoul will I praiſe him.* And we conceive , that ſometimes , God truſteth the accompliſhment of the promiſes with ſome precious manifeſtation of himſelf to the ſoul , which maketh them to *rejoyce with joy unſpeakeable and full of glory*; but however, this is the matter of a ſpiritual ſong, *That mercy and truth have met together, and righteouſneſs and peace are kiſſing one another* : Is it not a pleaſant matter of a ſong to behold *love* making promiſes, and to behold *faithfulneſs* accompliſhing them. And the laſt is, that the obſervation of the accompliſhment of promiſes, doth ſtrengthen a Chriſtians Faith in his intereſt in God; ſo that now many diſputings are ſilenced, & many queſtions now are out of the way, this is clear, Pſ. 31. 21, 22. *David* confeſſeth his quarrelling before, but when once the Lord *had ſhewed his marvellous loving kindneſs in a ſtrong city*, then all his quarrel was againſt himſelf, becauſe he had *quarrelled*, and did ſay *in his haſte, I am cut off from before thine eyes.*

And

And now we ſhall only ſpeak a little unto ſome duties that we would preſs upon you, from that which we have ſpoken; And the firſt duty is, that Chriſtians would be much in waiting for the accompliſhment of the promiſes, and ſtanding upon their watch tower until the *viſion ſhall ſpeak*: and we ſhall only give you theſe to enforce it. It is commanded that you ſhould ſo do, this is clear from *Pſ.* 27. at the cloſe: where *David* preſſeth that duty very much, *wait on the Lord*, ſaith he, and if that be not enough, he will repeat that command in that ſame verſe, *wait I ſay on the Lord*: and no doubt the doubling of it ſpeaketh not only the advantage that is in it, but our difficulty to obey it, and the great neceſſity that we have to go about it: and that ſame word is repeated by *David*, Pſ. 31. 24. *Be of good courage*, which is that ſame, to wait upon the Lord. 2. Theſe that wait patiently for the accompliſhment of the promiſes, God will ſtrengthen them to wait: this is clear from *Pſ.* 27. at the cloſe, *wait on the Lord*, and when we are *Hagar* like, caſting away the child of hope, he will open our eyes, and give us refreſhment, by which we may be ſupported under our diſquietment, *and he ſhall ſtrengthen thine heart*; And there is this, 3. There ſhall be a ſpeedy accompliſhment of the promiſes; it is not long before all the mercies that ever the Lord hath promiſed, and thou haſt believed, ſhall be told down to you, as it were, in one ſume, *principal* and *intereſt*; as is clear from *Hab.* 2. 3. where he poſitively aſſerteth, *That the viſion will come, and will not tarry.* There is indeed a pleaſant ſeeming contradiction in that verſe, he had ſaid before, *that the viſion would tarry*, and yet here he ſaith, *that the viſion will not tarry, but will ſurely come*, in which ye may ſee the divinity both of *ſenſe and faith*, and that noble contradiction that is between their aſſertions, *ſenſe* aſſerteth that the promiſe doth tarry too long, and *Faith* crying

ing out, it will ſurely come, it will not tarry, which is ſet down, 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. *The Lord is not ſlack concerning his promiſe.* 4. Promiſes that come unto us through the moſt ſtrong and lively exerciſe of Faith, and that are expected and longed for by us before they come, they are moſt reliſhing and ſweet, and thoſe mercies come unto us with a binding tye of love: this is ſomewhat pointed at, in *Iſ.* 25. 9. where the Church cryeth forth, *Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoyce in his ſalvation*, their waiting and expecting of the promiſe to be accompliſhed in its time, is there the fountain of their ſong, and of their ſpiritual joy: I think ſometimes a Chriſtian is like that misbelieving lord, 2 *King.* 7. 2. that though they meet with the accompliſhment of a promiſe, yet they do not taſte of the ſweetneſs that is in it, becauſe they did not believe the word of the Lord.

The ſecond duty that we would preſs from what we have ſpoken, is that Chriſtians would cloſe with the promiſes for their everlaſting inheritance, ſince the promiſes of the Covenant *are exceeding great*, and *exceeding precious*, and the advantage that lyeth in them is unſpeakable. O! ſhould not theſe things proclaim aloud unto us, *cloſe with the promiſes as your portion for ever?* I think, one that hath a right to the promiſes, and hath entered himſelf Heir unto the vaſt inheritance, he may ſometimes rejoyce in that threefold myſtery of the Goſpel, that to a natural man can hardly appear other then a contradiction. 1. He may ſay ſometimes, *I have nothing*, and yet I *poſſeſs all things*; for when he looketh unto his beeing in the World, he is a poor *Lazarus*, having no place whereon to lay his head; but when he caſteth his eye upon his ſpiritual inheritance, then he beholdeth his treaſures, and is conſtrained to cry out, I *poſſeſſe all things.* 2. Sometimes he may cry forth, I *am rich*, and yet I am *exceeding poor*: he may be rich

in hopes, and yet poor in his posſeſſions. There is much of a Chriſtians treaſure that lieth in hope; hope is that thing that wil make the Chriſtian ſweerly quite all other in compariſon of that: that is the motto of the Chriſtian, *ſpero meliora*; which he holdeth up in his flag, even in the greateſt ſtorm, and at length he findeth it true, that hope *maketh not aſhamed*. 3. Sometime the Chriſtian will cry forth; I *am always ſorrowing*, and yet *always rejoycing*: when he caſteth his eye upon himſelf, he will ſit down and water his couch with tears; but when with the other eye he reflecteth upon Jeſus Chriſt, *he will rejoyce with joy unſpeakable and full of glory*; a Chriſtian can both weep and rejoyce at one time, and again he can *rejoice and weep*: No doubt, the reflecting upon the immenſe hope, and that everlaſting Crown will make a Chriſtian rejoyce under all his diſquietments and anxieties in the world, he can look to the back of time, and behold a glorious Inheritance. A Chriſtian hath an eye of an Eagle that can behold and diſcern things afar of.

The third duty that we would preſs upon you, is, to long for the day when all the promiſes of the covenant of Grace ſhal receive their compleat accompliſhment, & when ye ſhall be entered into the everlaſting fruition of all the things wherein your bleſſedneſs lyeth. There is a threefold *come* that Chriſt ſpeaketh to the ſoul that is united unto him, all which they ſweetly obey. There is that firſt *come* which is in *Mat.* 11.28. *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy loaden*: And there is that ſecond *come*, Isai. 26. *Come, my people, enter into thy chambers*, which is to entertain that excellent correſpondency with him in troubleſome times: And there is that third matchleſs *come*, when Chriſt ſhall ſay to his own in the day of their ſtanding before the Tribunal, *Come, O bleſſed of my Father*: Shal we ſay it, that if we had *faith as a grain of*

of muſtard ſeed, we would cry forth, *Why is his chariot ſo long in coming*; and did we reliſh or made a high account of the matchleſs promiſes of the boundleſs Covenant, we would cry forth, *O that our time would flee away as the ſhips of deſire*. I ſhall ſay no more but this, Chriſt *is gone up with a ſhout* unto heaven, and ſhall come again with the *ſound of a trumpet*, *ſing praiſes to God, ſing praiſes, ſing praiſes unto our God, ſing praiſes*.

The laſt thing that we would preſs upon you, is, That ye would mark the time of the accompliſhment of the promiſes; And as to this, I ſhall ſay but theſe: 1. That ordinarily the time of the accompliſhment of the promiſes, is the time when ſenſe, reaſon, and probability doth moſt contradict them: this is clear, *Ezek.* 37. in the fulfilling of the promiſes that were paſt to *Judah* in their captivity, was it not when they were as a *valley of dead bones*, and their hopes were in a manner cut off for their part, from the 11. verſe of that chapter, compared with the 12. And, 2. That the time of the accompliſhment of the promiſes, ordinarily, is from *Dan.* 9. 2, 3. and from *Jer.* 29. 12. compared a praying time: this is alſo clear with the 10. and the 12. thus ſaith the Lord, the time when he will viſit them, and perform his good word to them, in cauſing them to return, it ſhall be a time when they ſhall *call upon me*, *and ſhall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto them*. And, 3. The time of the accompliſhment of his promiſes, It is a time when our thoughts of the promiſes are high and large, when once we begin to value our mercies, this is a ſign that our mercie is near, and it is bringing forth: however it is our duty to wait on him, who can give a beeing unto his Word, and ſweetly perform his promiſes: we ought not to limit infinite Wiſdom, nor to ſay unto him that is Infinite in ſtrength, *How can ſuch a thing be?* but anſwer all objections of misbelief with

this,

this, God hath ſpoken it, and he will alſo do it, and draw all objections of misbelief in that glorious and myſterious Name of His, *I am that I am.* To Him be praiſe.

SERMON VI.

Acts 26. 18. *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveneſs of ſins, and inheritance among them which are ſanctified, by faith that is in me.*

WHen firſt we did begin our diſcourſe upon the precious and excellent grace of Faith; We told you that we intended to ſpeak of it under a two-fold notion and conſideration. Firſt, As it layeth hold upon Chriſt for Juſtification; and of this we have ſpoken to you at ſome length, as ye have heard. Secondly, As it cloſeth with Chriſt for Sanctification; and of this we are to ſpeak of it, which are a part of that excellent Oration and Diſcourſe that *Paul* had before *Agrippa* in his own defence; In which Oration and Diſcourſe of his, ye may behold theſe four things eminently ſhining. 1. That Godlineſs, and good manners are not inconſiſtent, nor contrary one to another: Therefore ye will ſee in the ſecond and third verſes of this Chapter, *Paul* acting the part of a courtly Orator: and believe it, there is more good manners to be learned by being ſeven days in the School of Chriſt, then by being ſeven years in all the Courts of *France*. This, ſecondly, that innocent Policy he made uſe of in the deliverance of this Oration; which likewiſe doth appear in the ſecond and third verſes of this Chapter; where he endeavours to inſinuate and ingratiate himſelf in the favours of the perſon before whom he had ſtood; I confeſs, piety is the beſt policy that is taken up in entertaining piety, howbeit, true policy may move

move in one orb and ſphere with piety, and the one is not contrary to the other in ſome caſe. 3. This ſhineth in that diſcourſe, even the ſpiritual boldneſs *Paul* had in giving an excellent confeſſion of his faith, and the declaring him to be God, even Jeſus Chriſt in whom he did believe; *Chriſt witneſſed a glorious confeſſion before Pontius Pilat* for him, and he would witneſs a glorious *confeſſion* from *Agrippa* for Chriſt, that ſince Chriſt had not denied him in that notable day, he would not now deny precious Chriſt in this day: and this is from the beginning and all alongs. Laſtly; This ſhineth in the words that *Paul* doth ſet forth, the matchleſs freedom and unſpeakable riches of Chriſt; not only toward himſelf in that he did caſt the lot of everlaſting love toward him; but likewiſe toward the Gentiles, to whom he was ſent as a Preacher, and that he did glorioufly condeſcend to viſit the dark places of the earth, and to have the *morning* and *the day ſpring from on high* ariſing on the habitations of cruelty. And in this verſe which we have read, you may behold theſe five glorious ends of the preaching of this everlaſting Goſpel, for attaining of which, Miniſters are made inſtruments under God. The firſt is, to open *the eyes of the blind*, which in ſhort is, even this, to give thoſe that are ignorant of God, the ſpiritual knowledge of the deep myſteries of the Father, and of the Son: So that from this, ye may ſee that the Goſpel hath a kind of omnipotency in producing effects of the power of nature. The ſecond we may ſee in theſe words, to *remove them from darkneſs to light*; which importeth theſe two; 1. The removing of perſons from an eſtate of miſery, unto an eſtate of excellent joy. 2. The removing of perſons from a ſtate of iniquity, unto an eſtate of holineſs: *darkneſs* in Scripture pointeth out ſin, and *light* in Scripture pointeth out holineſs. 3. The bringing us *from under the power of Satan unto God*, the mak-

ing a blessed exchange of captivity and bondage, that these who were under the captivity of Satan, may be under the captivity of love, that those who were under the bondage of sin, may be under the sweet obedience of Christ, *whose yoke is easie, and whose burden is light*, Mat. 11. 30. 4. That persons may receive the *remission of sin and the forgiveness of their iniquity*. This is the great voice of the Gospel, come to a crucified Christ, come to a pardoning Christ, come to a glorified Christ, Christ hath the pardon of iniquity in his one hand, and riches of himself in the other, and these are the great motives by which he studieth to perswade us to come. And the last is in the close of the verse, that persons may receive forgiveness of sins, and *inheritance among them which are sanctified by Faith that is in me*; that is, that they may have a share of that glorious mansion, of that excellent Kingdom that Christ hath purchased, and hath gone before to prepare. And withal, in this verse as the words are set down, ye may see the excellent and orderly method that the Gospel keepeth in conquering souls, and you may see these excellent allurements, these perswasive arguments that Christ holdeth forth to conquer you, as it were, Christ cometh not to us cloathed with the robes of Majesty, but cloathed with the robes of Love and Advantage, knowing that in this posture he shall most gain upon our hearts.

Now in speaking unto that last end of the preaching of the Gospel, we shall only according to our present purpose, take notice of this one thing from it (not intending to prosecute it as it is an end of the Gospel (but as it is a property of Faith: and it is that, *Faith in Jesus Christ hath a noble excellent influence upon the growth of Sanctification, and the attaining of holiness*, *They are sanctified*, saith he, *through faith in me*. We shall not stand long to clear this unto you, it is evident from *Act.* 15. 9. where the Apostle telleth us of *puri-*

purifying our hearts by faith; and likewise, 1 *Tim.* 1. 5. where a pure heart and faith unfeigned; they are joyned and linked together. As likewise, 1 *Joh.* 3. 3. *Every man that hath this hope in him, he purifyeth himself.* All the Graces of the Gospel they are linked together by a golden and unseparable chain, so that he that obtaineth one, he shall obtain all; yea more, all the graces of the Gospel, they have a mutual influence upon one anothers growth, so that we may compare them unto *Hippocrates* twins, of whom it was reported, that they did laugh and weep together, and they did grow together; even so when one grace doth rejoyce, the rest doth rejoyce with it, and when one grace doth mourn, the rest doth also mourn with it, and when one grace doth grow, the rest of the graces of the Spirit they do likewise grow apace.

There are only three particulars that we shall insist a little upon: First, We shall shew you how faith hath influence upon the attaining of Sanctification, and this we make clear unto you in these respects.

1. In that it discovereth to the soul that matchless excellency, that transcendent beauty, and that surpassing comliness that is in Christ, which sight doth exceedingly perswade the soul to draw that conclusion, *what have I to do any more with idols?* A glorious sight of Christ, and acquaintance with him, maketh us lose our acquaintance with our idols; and when once we are united unto Christ by faith, we break that union we had with them. And indeed the want of the knowledge of the excellent comliness that is in Christ, and of love to him, is the great occasion that the poorest deities and idols in the world taketh up your hearts: did ye but once see him who is that *glorious Sun of righteousness*, ye would be forced to put in your *Amen* unto that excellent confession of Faith, *Eccl.* 1. 2. *Vanity of vanities, and all is but vanity and vexation of spirit.*

2. In that it is the grace that discovers unto a Christian the spotless holiness of Christ, faith doth not only discover the beauty of Christ, but likewise his holiness, and this doth make the soul fall in love with that excellent thing, *Sanctification*. It is recorded amongst the first steps to sin and misery, that we desire to be as God, knowing good and evil; but certainly it is amongst the first steps to life and happiness, when the soul desireth to be holy as he is holy: And I suppose, this is the great ground that ye are not much endeavouring a blessed conformity to God, and to be partakers of the blessed image of Christ, ye know not the beauty of holiness.

3. Faith layeth hold upon Jesus Christ, and draweth strength and vertue from him for the conquering of lusts, and in raising us up into a blessed conformity unto himself; when the Christian is weak, Faith is that noble correspondent between that emptiness that is in us, and the fulness that is in Christ; Faith is that noble correspondent between that weakness that is in us, and that everlasting strength that is in him: Therefore there are two noble and excellent counsels of Faith: First, It counsels us not to lean to our own strength; And secondly, to have our recourse unto him whose Name is *Jehovah* that *everlasting strength*; And no doubt, if we were more taken up in imploying Christ by faith, that prophecy should be accomplished, *I will make the feeble ones as David, and David as the Angels of God*, and when a Christian is most diffident in himself, then God should prove himself to be All-mighty, and All-sufficient.

And, 4. Faiths influence may be cleared in this, that it layeth hold upon the promises, & doth believe them: and believing of the promises bringeth forth that noble birth, *conformity to God*; according to that word upon which we were speaking, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. by believing the promises, (that is the advantage of it) *we are by them made partakers of the divine nature.*

5. Faith also believeth the threatnings that are past in Scripture against sin, and the believing them hath an undoubted and strong influence upon the attaining and growth of Sanctification; Faith strengtheneth the Christian, against the committing of iniquity with these two words; that word, *Rom.* 6. 20. *O soul* (saith Faith) commit not iniquity, for *the wages of sin is death*; and that word, *Rev.* 21. last, *There shall in no ways enter into that city any thing that is unclean, or that committeth iniquity.* And be perswaded of it, that the faith of the threatnings and of the promises that are in Scripture, would be as a threefold cord, not easily broken, to restrain you from the acting of iniquity; And shall I tell you briefly the ground why these cursed hearts of ours do commit iniquity with so little fear, and with so much delight, it is even this, because we believe not the threatnings of God, which shall be accomplished in their own season; for is it possible that if ye believed that word, *Rev.* 21. last, *That nothing shall enter into the new Jerusalem that defileth or worketh abomination, or that maketh a lie*; that ye durst for a world adventure upon the committing of iniquity, as ye do. And I shall only say to such that do undervalue the threatnings of God, the day is coming when they shall be constrained to cry out, *He hath spoken it, and he hath done it, and faithful is he.* There is not one jot nor title in the Word of the Lord that shal fall to the ground: And believe it, God will be faithful in the accomplishment of his threatnings, as he is faithful in the accomplishment of his promises.

6. Faith discovereth unto a Christian the noble excellencies and those spiritual dignities that are in that everlasting estate that is provided for the Saints in light; Faith (as it were) carrieth up the soul

to the top of *Piſgah*, off which, it is admitted to behold the *promiſed land*, and truely the ſeeing of theſe noble things that are provided for the Saints, cannot but make them ſtudy holineſs, ſince they know that there is an impoſſibility for one to attain to that eſtate without holineſs, becauſe he had ſaid it, *Without holineſs no man ſhall ſee God.* O then, if once ye ſaw Heaven, ye would be conſtrained to walk in that path of Sanctification, ſince it is the glorious way by which ye muſt walk in through the gates of that bleſſed City. But ye know not the excellency that is there, it is a fancy and notion unto you: and the ground that ye do not ſtudy to conform your ſelves unto that bleſſed image of God. And I would only ask you this one queſtion, Is it poſſible that ſuch a deluſion as this can overtake you, as to think, that you who never ſtudied holineſs on earth, ſhall yet enter into Heavens gates? I know there are ſome that ſay in their hearts, *I ſhall have peace though I walk in the imaginations of mine own heart*: and many more that ſuppoſe that they might fight and overcome, that they may quite the eſtate of nature, and be compleat in the eſtate of grace, all in one day: But why will ye deceive your ſelves, *Can a nation be born in one day?* Or is there but one ſtep between hell and heaven? O remember, though nothing be impoſſible with God, yet there was but one thief ſaved upon the croſs. 7. Faith hath influence upon the attaining of holineſs in this reſpect, that it believeth the exceeding great advantages that are promiſed unto the perſon that ſtudieth holineſs. Faith believeth that word, Mat. 5. 8. *Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit, for they ſhall ſee God.* Faith it layeth hold upon the truth of the excellent ſayings, and maketh the Chriſtian endeavour to attain unto a likeneſs and conformity with him, ſo that he may be admitted to behold his face for all eternity, and to be made like unto him.

8. Faith

8. Faith diſcovereth unto a Chiſtian the ſinfulneſs of ſin, this is never done till once they be in the lively exerciſe of the grace of Faith. And I will give you theſe three grounds why faith compleatly diſcovereth the ſinfulneſs of ſin. 1. Faith letteth us ſee the perſon againſt whom we commit this ſin, and that doth exceedingly aggredge ſin; for when the Chriſtian is admitted to behold God, and to ſee that matchleſs excellency that is in him, then (ſaith he) what a beaſt was I to offend ſuch a glorious Majeſty as he? what a fool was I to kick againſt the pricks, or to enter in the liſts with ſuch an infinite God? 2. Faith letteth a Chriſtian ſee theſe excellent obligations of love that Chriſt hath impoſed upon us; Faith letteth us ſee the ancient and everlaſting love of Chriſt; Faith is that grace that letteth us ſee his ſufferings, Faith letteth us ſee all that he hath done for us, and this maketh the Chriſtian to cry out, *Do I thus requite the Lord, O fooliſh one and unwiſe?* And no doubt, if a Chriſtian were more taken up in the ſtudy of this duty, he would be leſs in contracting debt, and were you but ſeriouſly taken up in the ſtudy of theſe two great Regiſters; 1. The Regiſter in which all the infinite acts of love are recorded. And, 2. That regiſter in which all your acts of offending precious Chriſt are written, ye would be aſtoniſhed & aſhamed to ſee ſo much forgiven you, & durſt not ſin any more; there ye wold ſee infinite mercy *deſiring to rejoyce over Judgment*; and there ye would ſee the ſpotleſs riches of that tranſcendent grace that is in Chriſt. 3. Faith letteth a Chriſtian ſee the diſadvantages of ſin, and what woful effects doth follow upon it, and this doth exceedingly hold forth the ſinfulneſs of ſin.

The ſecond think that we ſhall ſpeak to concerning Faiths influence in the attaining ſanctification, ſhall be to enquire a little into theſe things that hin-

der even believers from attaining this bleſſed effect of their Faith; for ſome Chriſtians there are, that in ſome reſpects are taken up in the exerciſe of Faith; making uſe of Chriſt for Sanctification, and yet their making uſe of Chriſt by Faith, doth not weaken the ſtrength of their idols (at leaſt) to their apprehenſions, neither doth raiſe them up to a conformity with God; ſo that they are conſtrained ſometimes to cry out, *I ſhall once fall by the hand of one of mine iniquities*; and when they fight and do not overcome, they are at laſt conſtrained to ſay, *There is no hope.*

The firſt ground of ſuch a diſpenſation is, That a Chriſtian is not conſtant in his actings of faith, he will be ſtrong in faith to day, and when the morrow cometh, he will faint in that exerciſe, and this doth exceedingly interrupt the noble victory of Faith; for when Faith hath gotten its advantages, they loſe them through ſecurity and negligence, that is a command that ſhould be continually obeyed, *Truſt in the Lord at all times*; and no doubt, if a Chriſtian were more taken up in the conſtant acting of faith, he ſhould ſometimes ſing that ſong, *I truſted in God, and I was helped.*

Secondly, The moſt part of Chriſtians, they are not ſtrong and vigorous in actings of their Faith, their Faith is exceedingly weak, and ſo they cannot bring forth theſe noble fruits and effects of Faith. If we were truſting in God with all our hearts, then that promiſe, *Pſ.* 37.5. ſhould be accompliſhed unto us, *Truſt in the Lord, and he ſhall bring it to paſs.* Thirdly, There is a ſtrong heart-conjunction, and ſoul-union between us and our Idols: we are joyned to our Idols, and therefore we cannot be eaſily divorced; yea, when we are in the heat of the war againſt them, there is a procuratour within, that cryeth, *O ſpare this little one*, or this *profitable* or *pleaſant* one, and this is ordinarily our pra-

practice, to ſpare the choiceſt of our luſts, ſo that our *Agags* may cry forth, *The bitterneſs of death is paſt.* But I confeſs, if that union were once diſſolved, we ſhould then be heard with greateſt earneſtneſs to cry forth, *O bleſſed be the Lord that teacheth my hands to fight.* Fourthly, ſometimes a Chriſtian layeth too much weight upon the actings of Faith, and doth not imploy Faith, but as an inſtrument to which Chriſt muſt beſtow ſtrength to conquer. Sometimes we think that faith hath the vertue of overcoming in its own hand, but remember, faith is but an empty thing without Chriſt, as you may ſee, *Act.* 15.9. where the *puriſying their hearts by faith*, is aſcribed to the holy Ghoſt, ſo that the activity of faith is from him, and not in it ſelf. Fifthly, a Chriſtian doth not hate ſin with a perfect hatred, even in the time of his warfare with his luſts, & with theſe ſtrong Idols that are within him, but here is a ſecret heart inclination to that very idol which he doth oppoſe: So that oftentimes there is that twofold contradiction in a Chriſtian; Sometimes his light will cry, mortifie ſuch an idol, & yet his heart will cry, O ſpare ſuch an idol; yea more, ſometimes his heart will cry, mortifie ſuch an idol & yet his heart wil cry, Oſpare ſuch an idol. That is to ſay, there will be one part of our affection crying one thing, and another part of it will cry another thing. O! but there is a remarkable command for the perfect hatred of ſin, *Rom.* 11. *Abhor that which is evil*; the word is in the original, hate evil as ye would do hel that is, have perfect hatred to ſin. O to hate iniquity as much as hell: and joyn that word, *Eph.* 5.11. *Reprove the unfruitful works of darkneſs*, or as the word may be rendered, *make out by unanſwerable arguments*, to your tentations, that you cannot imbrace the unfruitful works of darkneſs, convince your tentations that ye cannot do it; As we ſuppoſe, it was a noble ar-

arguing of *Joseph* when he was tempted, *How shall I do this?* he puts the tentation (as it were) to it: O tentation! give me one ground why I should commit such an iniquity. And certainly, if we were thus reasoning with our tentations, they should flee before us; But the truth is, we imbrace the desire of our tentation upon implicite faith. It is a sad regrate, and yet I may utter it, O if men would but deal with God, as they do by Satan, we never dispute the promise of Satan, and never examine these alurements he setteth forth, and yet we constantly dispute with God upon every thing. Sixthly, A Christian promoveth not in the growth of Sanctification, though in some measure exercising faith, because he hath not such a heart to holiness. If we did discover more that excellent beauty, that is, in being cloathed with that glorious robe of the righteousness of Christ, and in having the sweet draughts of the image of Christ engraven upon our hearts, we wold have more victory over our lusts. There is a command for *a perfect love* to that which is good, & holiness in that same place, *Rom.* 12. 9. and *cleave* (saith he) *to that which is good*: or, as the word may be rendred, *be married and glewd* to that which is good, let there be an unseparable & indissolvable knot of union between you & that which is good. And certainly, if once we believed that report which is given of holiness, we would endeavour more to be cloathed with it; but that is the great ground why we advance not in holiness, we know not the advantage nor dignity, to be made *like God*. O will ye think on it: What a thing is it for you who are the dust of his feet to be made conform to him? Seventhly, a Christian is not much in the exercise of other duties that should go along with faith, suspect that faith for presumption, that can act, and be maintained without Prayer, certainly prayer it keepeth in the life of Faith, Prayer, it is that grace that must act mutually with

with faith, in accomplishing that blessed work of Sanctification, and if we prayed more, and believed more, then we should have more to speak concerning the victory over our lusts. When was it, O Christian, and expectant of Heaven, that ye was constrained to put up an *Ebenezer*, and cry forth, *Hitherto hath the Lord helped me?* When was it, O Christian, and expectant of Heaven, that ye was put to cry forth, *God hath arisen, and mine enemies are scattered before my face?* I will tell you what is your practice, ye make such a covenant with your idols as *Nahash* did with the men of *Jabesh Gilead*, 1 *Sam.* 11. 23. your lusts desire to make you pluck out your right eyes, & there is nothing your lusts will command you, but almost ye will obey; but would you send out prayers as a messenger to tell the King of such tyrranny, ye should know better what it is to be victorious. There is such a covenant between the graces of the spirit, especially between Faith and Prayer (if so we may allude) as was made between *Joab* and *Abishai*, 2 *Sam.* 10. 11. one grace, as it were, saith to another, if I be weak, *come over and help me*: and if ye be weak, I *will come and help you.* When one grace is like to fall in battel, then another cometh and helpeth it: when faith is like to die, then prayer and experience cometh in, and sweetly helpeth faith; when love is beginning to die, and wax cold in the sight, then faith cometh in and putteth life in love; and when patience is like to fail and be overcome, then faith comes in and speaks that word to patience, *wait on God, for I shall yet praise him for the health of his countenance.* Oftentimes our patience and our sense, they joyn together, for when sense speaketh good things, patience is in life; but when once sense preacheth hard things, it is like to die, and faith must then maintain and uphold it.

The third thing that we shall speak as to Faiths influence

fluence upon sanctification, shal be to draw these four conclusions from the point.

The first is, That ye may know from this the rise and original of your little success over corruption: There are many that are troubled with this question: O, What is the ground that I get not victory over my lusts: and they propose that question to Christ, that once the Disciples proposed to him, *why was it that I could not cast out such a Devil?* And I can give no other answer then Christ gave to them, it is because ye have not Faith, *For if ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed*, ye might say unto your idols, depart from us, and they should obey you, and there should not be a mountain in the way between you and Heaven, but if ye had Faith, it should be roled away, and become a plain. And the great ground why many are groaning under the captivity of their idols, is, that they are not much in the exercise of Faith; sometimes ye enter in the lists with your lusts in your own strength, then ye are carried captives, and if ye do enter in the lists having some Faith, yet ye maintain not the war, if Faith get but one stroak.

I will tell you six things; which if Faith overcome, it keepeth the field, and maketh the Christian sing a song of triumph, even before a compleat victory.

First, Faith helpeth a Christian to overcome that idol of impatience and discontent, some never meet with a discouragement, but they cryed out, *This evil is of the Lord, why should I wait any longer?* they are soon put to the end of their patience; now faith can overcome such an idol, & I will tel you three excellent things that faith performeth to the soul under impatience, or when it is in hazard of it. 1. Faith telleth the christian, *there is an end*, & their *expectation shall not be cut off*; Faith telleth there is a morning as well as a night, and this keepeth the soul from being overcome with discouragement, when they are brought to the mid-

midnight of trouble: Faith can tell what hour of the night it is, & how near the approaching of the morning, when day shall break and their clouds flee away. 2. Faith helpeth the Christian to see there is much in Christ to make up any loss or disadvantage that they have: if ye lose your son, or your choisest contentment in the world, Faith will say such a word as *Elkana* said to *Hannah*, 1 *Sam.* 1. 8. Is not *Christ better to thee then ten sons?* the choisest contentments ye can lose (that is faiths divinity) Christ is worth an hundred of them; and so this maketh the soul to be ashamed of their impatiency, and to give over their fretting at the excellent and wise dispensations of God. 3. Faith letteth a Christian see, that there is not a dispensation that he meeteth with, but it hath these two excellent ends, it hath our advantage as one end, and the glory of the Lord as another end; and there is not a dispensation that a Christian meeteth with, but these are the glorious ends proposed in it. And therefore I would only give you this advice, evermore when ye meet with a dark dispensation, let faith interpret it, for it is only the best interpreter of dark dispensations, for if ye meet with sense, this is its interpretation, he is not chastning me in love, but punishing me with the wound of an enemy, but faith will propheste good things to you in the darkest night.

The second next great idol that faith will bring low, Is this idol of covetousness and desire to the things of the world. I think that word, *Ecclesiast.* 3. 1. was never so much accomplished as it is in these days, and amongst you, *He hath set the world in your hearts*, that is the idol that dweleth and lodgeth within you; yea, the world it hath your first thoughts in the morning, and your last thoughts at night, yea, more, it hath your thoughts when you are at prayer, and when you are at preaching; yea, it hath such a dominion over you, that it giveth you, as it were, a new

Bible,

Bible, and in all the ten Commands scrapeth out the Name of God, and setteth down the world. And whereas God saith, *Thou shalt have no other God but me*, the world saith, *Thou shalt have no other Gods but me*, &c. But faith will bring this idol low, and soon let you see the vanity and emptiness of it; yea, faith would let you see a more noble object, and withal, discover unto you how short your time is, and how few hours ye have to spend in following after lies; and I am perswaded of this, that if ye could win to shake hands with cold death every day, and say, thou at last shall be my prince, and shall be the king to whom I shall be a subject; and if ye believed that the day of eternity were approaching, it would be a mean to mortifie these pursuits after the world; and I shall say, he is a blessed Christian that can maintain always such thoughts of the world, as he shall have when he is standing upon the utmost line between Time and Eternity. I shall say it, and believe it; O worldling, and O thou that hast the Moon upon thy head, and in thy heart, the day shall once come that thou may preach as much of the vanity of the world, as those that undervalued it never so much.

The third great idol that faith will bring low, is that idol of *self-love* and *self-indulgence*, that which is the great mother of all other idols. I think if there were no more to be said against that idol of self-love & self-indulgence, then that which is in 2 *Tim.* 3. 2. were sufficient, that among all the great idols of the latter times, this is put in the first place, *they shall be lovers of themselves*; we cannot take pains for Christ, we cannot go about the exercise of any duty, because that idol of self-indulgence forbiddeth us. I will tell you its counsel & great advice it giveth you, *O person, pity thy self*, that same counsel *Peter* gave his Master, it bidderh you pitty your self. But if ye could rightly interpret that language, it would be this; *destroy your self;*

self, for self-indulgence and self-love is that which will ruine you. O what blessed attainments of God; what blessed fruitions of Jesus Christ, what advancement in mortification, what conformity to God, hath that idol of self-indulgence obstructed, and not only utterly ruined even in the best? I think, if once ye could set your foot upon that idol, the rest should fal apace; that is the *general* of all the forces of your lusts, and it is a *Saul*, the head higher then the rest of all your idols within you.

The fourth idol that faith will subdue, is self-righteousness, this is a great thing we maintain, we will never renounce our own righteousness, and submit to the righteousness of Christ, and the great ground of it is, that there is this principle within us all, we love to go to Heaven thorow a Covenant of works, & we never desire to be much oblieged to any other, we cannot submit our selves to the righteousness of Christ.

The fifth great idol that faith can subdue, is that of *pleasure*, the world, and the contentments of it; *pleasure* is the great idol that many worship, and adore, there are some that love the gain of the world, and there are others that love the pleasures of the world; but Faith hath a noble influence upon the bringing low such an idol; for faith discovereth to a soul more excellent pleasures, more sweet delights nor is to be found under the sun; faith maketh a Christian lose his taste unto all things that are here below; faith is that grace that maketh us grow blind, and not much to behold these passing vanities, these transient delights of a present evil world.

Our second conclusion is this, That as faith helpeth Sanctification, so Sanctification helpeth Faith. I will tel you three great advantages faith hath by the growth & exercise of Sanctification; 1. It Is a noble evidence of faith, & maketh a Christian to be perswaded that he is settled upon the rock, and that his interest in God, is made

made sure. Sanctification is that which will help a Christian daily to read his interest in God; this is clear from *Jam.* 2. 18. *I will shew thee my faith by my works*, where this is clearly holden forth, that a Christian much in the work of Sanctification, he can upon all times give an extract of his faith, & as it were, discover it, and shew it to the world 2. Sanctification maketh faith perfect, according to that remarkable word, *Jam.* 2.22. *And by works was faith made perfect.* There is a noble perfection that redoundeth to faith through the exercise of the work of Sanctification, for not only is it thereby made manifest, and receiveth such a shining lustre and splendor, as that sometimes the eyes of carnal men are even dazled to behold a Believer, but it also receiveth strength and power; Faith is not of the nature of these things that spend themselves in bringing forth; but on the contrary, if faith bring forth a hundred children (I mean works of holiness) in one day it groweth strong; and this is further clear, 2 *Pet.* 1.8. *For if these things be in you and abound, ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful.* And from that other word, *Jam.* 2. where it is said, *That faith without works is dead, being alone*: If faith be alone, it wants its spiritual life and vigor; but if ye were much in the exercise of the work of Sanctification, ye would, no doubt, attain to a noble and lively acting of that grace of Faith. And lastly, if a Christian be much in the work of Sanctification, there will be a comfortable exercise of Faith; Sometimes faith is exercised with much anxiety, and sometimes with much doubting: but faith and a pure conscience joyned together, they make an excellent feast, and maketh a Christian rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Thirdly, we may draw this conclusion, if faith have influence upon the work of Sanctification, and helpeth the producing of a noble conformity to God, then,

then, I say, there are many that their faith is a delusion, and *their hope shall be cut off as a spiders web.* There are some that have faith, that have not Sanctification, nor knows not what it is, and shall not that faith unquestionably *perish as a dream, and evanish as the vision of the night!* and therefore if ye would testifie the reality of your faith, then study more the work of sanctification. I shall but from *Job* 8.14,15. give you these eight properties of a hypocrites faith and hope, which may make you try and examine your self, 1. Their hope and their faith is but an act of folly, yea, there is not such an act of foolishness under Heaven, as a hypocrites hope, because it is but a castle in the air, and as writing to himself a charter on the sand: so that word ye have rendred, whose *hope shall be cut off*, Is in the Original, *whose folly shall be cut off*, shewing this, that they build without a foundation, and so their faith must be most unsure and uncertain. 2. The thing they hope for, shall at last loath them: O hypocrites, ye hope for enjoyment of Christ, but be perswaded of it, Christ shall eternally loath you, and ye shall eternally loath Christ, that is clear in that same word, *whose hope shall be cut off*, or as the word may be read, *whose hope shall loath them*; the thing he hoped for shall loath him, and Christ shall say, *Depart, I know you not.* 3. And though ye have now much delight, and pleasure in the actings of your presumptuous hope, yet at last, ye shall loath that hope; the word will carry, that not only the things ye hoped for shall loath you, but ye likewise shall loath your hope. The day is coming that ye shall cry forth, curséd be the day that ever I believed that I should get Heaven. 4. It shall at last be the matter of his vexation, from that word, *whose hope shall be cut off*, or as the word may be rendered, *whose hope shall vex him.* O when the hypocrites shal meet with that anxious, that dreadful disappointment one day, they shall then put

their

their hand on their head, being aſhamed becauſe of their confidence. 4. He ſtudieth by all means to keep his hope, though it be but falſe: therefore have ye that word in the 15. verſe., *he holdeth it faſt*; or as the word is, *he keepeth it with hand and arm, with all his ſtrength* he keepeth his hope: ſo that if Chriſt would come from Heaven, and ſay, *man*, thou art a hypocrite, and thy *hope ſhall be cut off*, they would ſay, I will keep my hope, Sir, and maintain it, and that is an evidence your hope is not built upon the foundation; I love never a Faith that in this ſide of time is unchangeable, and never knoweth what it is to have ups nor downs. 5. It is built always upon a wrong foundation, which is imported in that word, *he ſhall lean upon his houſe*, which we ſuppoſe may be interpreted thus, he ſhall lean upon his *worldly enjoyments*, or upon theſe ſpiritual-like enjoyments he met with. The hope of a hypocrite is never built upon Chriſt, and ſo unqueſtionably that hope ſhall be cut off, and evaniſh. 6. Let hypocrites hold faſt their hope with both their arms, I will ſay theſe three words to them; Firſt, if all the Miniſters ſhould preach to you, and deſire you to quite your hope, and ye will not, yet both your hope and you ſhal be ſeparate, as it is in that word, *Your hope ſhal depart from you*, and ye ſhall quite it. Secondly, your hope will bring you to death, and no further, according to that word, *Job* 18. 14. *whoſe hope ſhall bring them to the King of terrours*: Will it bring me no further, ſay you? O, no, *The King of terrours ſhall ſeparate you and your hope*. Thirdly, the day is coming when the foundation of it ſhall be diſcovered, and there ſhall not be a deluſion, but it ſhall be unfolded. The day is approaching, when Chriſt ſhall ask how you got your faith, and how you maintained it. 7. The hypocrites hope is a poor building, it is as *a ſpiders web*, which I conceive (without being critick) is this. The hope of hy-

hypocrites, they ſpin it out of their own bowels, they have it not from Chriſt, but as ye ſee a ſpider ſpin out of its own bowels, ſo do they out of themſelves, it is no better ſtuff then their own rotten righteouſneſs: Chriſt never begat thoſe unto a lively hope. Let me beſeech you therefore that by all means ye wold ſtudy to make ſure your interest in Chriſt, and to build your faith on him, whoſe Name is that *munition of rocks*; For believe it, I may ſay it with much perſwaſion, I know there are many that ſhall once meet (if God prevent it not) with a dreadful diſappointment: and therefore as ye would not incur that eternal hazard that is attending thoſe that preſumptouſly take hold of a hope, before Chriſt take hold of them, ſtudy to ſearch your hope what it is: I deſire not to raze any foundation of their hope that is laid by the hand of Chriſt; but would deſire, and charge you to raze the foundation of that hope which ye have laid from the beginning by your own hands, *and he knew it not*. I would preſs theſe three things upon you, Firſt, O ye that are ſtrangers to Chriſt, and that know not what it is to imbrace the offers of the everlaſting Goſpel: obey that excellent counſel, 2 *Chron*. 30. 8. *Give Chriſt your hand*; for that word which ye have rendered, *Yeeld your ſelf to the Lord*, it is in the original, *Give your hand to God*; which is in ſhort, *Marry him*, and be content to *contract* your ſelf to him; for believe it, the day is coming, that either that contract between you and Chriſt ſhall be eternally confirmed, or that contract between the devil and you, ſhall be eternally ratified. And I ſuppoſe, there is ſo much ſpoken to the commendation of that noble Plant of Renown, that ye may take Chriſt (if ſo we may ſpeak) blindly, ye may cloſe your eyes & take him, for he ſhal never diſappoint your hope; for let you think of him to Eternity, he ſhall always be above your thoughts. Secondly, I would earneſtly deſire you once to ſearch

and

and try what was the firſt riſe of your faith in Jeſus Chriſt: I am perſwaded of it, there are many that take up their faith at their foot, they never travelled in pain, & yet faith is brought forth. Is not this a myſtery? ſhall it be ſaid, *before they travelled, they brought forth?* I do not queſtion but there may be leſſer and greater pangs of the new birth, but this is moſt certain, there is always ſome either leſſer troubles or greater, til that child be brought forth; and yet I may condemn theſe that *ſtay too long in the place of the breaking forth of children.* Chriſt will never refuſe you when ye do really come, becauſe ye have not been ſo many years & days imprioned to the Law. Thirdly, Let me deſire you to go and ask, is there a grave between you and heaven, in all that way through which the Saints have travelled upon which this is written here lyeth a man that ſincerely ſought life from Chriſt, and he denyed him; I think without encroaching too much upon the ſearching forth of the exerciſe of the Saints in Heaven, I think we may ſuppoſe, there may be in Heaven ſome *Queries* and Interrogations; Chriſt ſhall ask, O beloved, Did ye want any thing here below when ye were ſent forth to travel in the world? and ye ſhall be conſtrained to anſwer, *No*: Chriſt ſhall ask that queſtion at you, Did I not all things well? and ye ſhal be conſtrained to anſwer, *Yes*: Chriſt ſhall propoſe that queſtion, Are ye not well rewarded for all your pains? and you ſhall be conſtrained to anſwer; *Yes*; O but to take him, He is the bleſſed and moſt excellent One in Heaven and in Earth, it is the beſt bargain that ever ye made: O ye Merchants that have made many excellent bargains to your own apprehenſions, will ye come and make one excellent bargain yet, that will make you eternally up? And what is that? Come and *buy Chriſt* and take him for nothing, this is not your ordinary bargaining: there is few comes to you, and biddeth you buy excellent things *without*

without money; but come in the Goſpel, and ye ſhall get Chriſt *without money*: O niggards that are loath to ſpend your money in the world, will ye come to Chriſt, and believe on him, take him freely: O ſay ye, if I could get three things of Chriſt, I would come, 1. I would have much gold and ſilver: I ſay come to Chriſt & ye ſhal get much gold & ſilver: is that true? it is abundantly true, See *Job* 22. 25, 26. where preſſing that exhortation. *Acquaint thy ſelf with God* & uſing many arguments, he ſaith, *Thou ſhalt lay up gold as duſt, and the gold of Ophire as the ſtones of the brooks.* Is not that gold enough? yea, ye ſhall have ſilver likewiſe, *Thou ſhalt have plenty of ſilver.* In the 26. *verſe*, ye ſhall not only have gold and ſilver, but ſhall have *plenty of it* and ſhall have the moſt excellent and refined gold. But O ſay ye, what, will that promiſe be literally accompliſhed to me, if I come to Chriſt? I would only ſay theſe three things to thee; 1. Come to Chriſt, & if gold and ſilver be for thy advantage thou ſhalt have it literally accompliſhed. 2. I ſay, ye ſhall have as much contentment in Jeſus Chriſt, as if ye had this houſe full of gold; 3. I will ſay this to thee, Chriſt ſhall be thy gold and ſilver, according to that word in the 26. verſe, which is moſt remarkable; yea, *Almighty ſhall be thy defence*; or as it is in the Original, ſhall be thy *gold*, ſpeaking of the promiſe of gold before. Secondly, Ye ſay I would ſay this, that what I purpoſe might be accompliſhed. I ſay, come to Chriſt and ye ſhall have that likewiſe, *Job* 22. 28. *Thou ſhalt decree a thing, and it ſhall be eſtabliſhed unto thee*; which I conceive doth not only take in theſe ſpiritual decrees, but likewiſe theſe that relate to temporal enjoyments. But there is a third thing I would have (ſay ye) and I would come to Chriſt, and it is, that I might have all the deſires of my heart; I ſay, O man, and O woman, come to Chriſt and thou ſhalt have what thou deſireſt; this

is clear from *Ps.* 37. 4. *Delight thy self in God, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart*, What can ye have man but it is there? Would ye have any thing of Christ? He putteth a blank in your hand, and saith that word which he said to *Solomon, Ask*, What would ye have, and I shall give you? Christ, as it were, putteth his Name to the foot of a clean sheet of paper, and he desireth you to ask what ye would have, and is not this an excellent bargain? O, niggard, what would ye have which ye will not get in Christ? And be perswaded, that ye that refuse and wil not take him, the eternal curse of all that is in Heaven will return upon thy head, the eternal curse of all the expectants of Heaven, and heirs of Life, will return upon the head of that person, that will not take Christ. And cursed, cursed shall that person be who will not take Christ, and one day *all the Congregation* in Heaven and Earth shall say, *Amen.*

SERMON VII.

2 Cor. 13. 5. *Examine your selves whether ye be in the Faith? prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates.*

ASsurance is a precious gift which many that live in these days do undervalue, & tread under foot; do not the Christians of these times go halting between two opinions, being neither positive that they are received *into the adoption of children*, nor yet positive that they are yet in a state of alienation, and *enemies in their minds by wicked works*; yea, & (that which is worse) there are many among us that walk with much contentment under their uncertainty. I think it is a fault to be condemned in many, they pursue more to satisfie their sense for the present, nor to have a solid well grounded assurance for time to come: I could wish that all the debates and questions of these days, that

that take up so much of our time, and so much of our spirits from better things, were happily drowned in these four excellent questions, which without controversie are of greatest concernment for all to have resolved, 1. Where shall I rest all night when the long shadows of the everlasting evening shall be stretched out upon me, and whether or not hath Christ gone before to take up a place for me in his Fathers house? 2. It is a soul-concerning question, *Master, what shal I do to inherit eternal life?* to be asking at him that can sweetly resolve you. And, 3. not to rest there, but to be crying forth in the morning, *what shall I do to be saved*, and to be crying out in the evening, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* 4. It is sweet to be asking seriously, *Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?* There is much of our time spent in asking news from Court, and from abroad, concerning the revolutions of States and Kingdoms: But I suppose, it were better to ask, what news from Heaven concerning thy self, and what news from within, and news of thy Bridegrooms coming? for these are great Courts, I mean the Court of Heaven, and the Court of Conscience, the affairs of which, a Christian should endeavour much to know. 5. It is a soul-concerning question, that a Christian should be much in proposing to himself, *what shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?* It is certain, we must say, that our Faith and assurance, and all our other mercies are from him, and yet alace, we are negligent in praises, we may with *Tamar* rent our garments of *divers colours*, even the *garments of the Kings Daughters*, because of spiritual whoredom against God, and our ingratitude to him.

Now having spoken unto you at so great a length of that precious and foundamental grace of faith, we have thought fit to shut up all in speaking a little upon these words we now have read, concerning the evi-

these words we now have read, concerning the evidence and assurance of Faith. The Apostle in this Chapter is vindicating his Ministry and Apostleship, from the contempt that was cast upon it, he proveth he was a Minister of the New Testament, called and sent of God, by the blessing & success he had amoug them, in that he had not plowed nor threshed in vain; and they being so much in censuring his way, and seeking an account of his Ministry: In these words, he doth (as it were) draw them off by a holy diversion unto another business, as if he had said to them, O *Corinthians*, I will divert you from the exercise of judging me, and will lead you into an exercise that is more divine and profitable; be much in judging and examining your selves; and indeed, it is a truth worth our observation, that if we were more in judging of our selves, we would be less in judging others; but alace there are some of us, we are so much abroad, that we cannot be much at home.

In the words, there is these six things considerable, First, that there is such a thing attainable by a Christian while he is here, as a distinct perswasion and assurance that he is in the Faith, and hath an interest in Christ, *by being in the Faith*; here is not to be understood a beeing in the *Doctrine of Faith* only, but it is to be understood of principally, being indeed and really united to Christ by Faith. Secondly, that the seeking after assurance, is a necessary commanded duty, for ye see here the words are very imperative, *Examine your selves, prove your selves*. Thirdly, that there are many mistakes and delusions among people, concerning that noble and excellent thing, *Assurance*, there being many that keep fast a hope which Christ shall once discountenance and sweep away: like *a spiders web*, and this is imported in these words, *Examine your selves*, or as the word may be rendered, *Take an accurate and an experimented search of your selves,*

selves, try your selves, or prove your selves; it is a word that is borrowed from the Gold-smiths fining and trying of Gold. And so his putting of the *Corinthians* to so accurate a search of themselves, saith this clearly to us, there are many mistakes concerning this thing, many do pass a decreet in their own favours, before Christ hath passed his approbation of them. Fourthly, Take notice of this from the words, that there is much and exceeding much advantage, by trying and searching whether we be in the faith or no, this is imported in his doubling the exhortation. Fifthly, That one most excellent and spiritual way of attaining assurance, whether we be in the faith or no; is self-examination, and putting our self to the tryal, as if he had said, would ye have a distinct perswasion that ye are in Christ, then be much in the exercise of self-examination. For the rest of the words of the verse, we intend not to handle.

As to the first, *That there is such a thing attainable*, I shall only propose these reasons unto you to make it evident, 1. It is known in Scripture that the Saints of old have in an ordinary way attained to distinct perswasion of their interest in Christ, *Song* 6. *My beloved is mine and I am his*, and *Rom.* 8. 38. *I am perswaded* (saith the Apostle) *that neither death nor life, &c. shall be able to separate me from the love of God in Christ*, and 2 *Cor.* 5. 1. *For we know, if this our earthly tabernacle were dissolved, we have a house with God not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* 2. It is the great scope of many Scriptures, to shew how Christians may attain to assurance, 1 *Joh.* 1. 13. *These things I write unto you that ye may know that ye have eternal life.* The great end and design of *John*, writing in these Epistles, is to make a soul acquaint with Christ, and to make them to accept of him, and to give them a distinct assurance that Christ hath accepted them. 3. There

are many commands in Scripture for Christians to be serious in searching after assurance. 2. *Pet.*1.10. *Wherefore brethren give all diligence to make your calling and election sure.* 4. It is the blessed end of Gods oath in the everlasting covenant, that a Christian might get assurance. What was the great ground and great end that God confirmed his Covenant with an oath, was it not? *Heb.*6.18. *That by two immutable things, wherein it was impossible for God to lie, ye might have strong consolation.* 5. If assurance of our interest in Christ were not attainable, then these precious graces of joy and love could not be well exercised: If a Christian were evermore in the dark concerning his interest in Christ, he could not give obedience to that exhortation, *Rejoyce evermore, again, I say, rejoyce.* 6. The Scripture hath set down these means by which a Christian may win to assurance: as is clear, 1. *Joh.* 3. 18, 19. 2*Pet.*4.5. compared with *verse* 10. where the Apostle *Peter* pressing the Doctrine of making our calling and election sure, he setteth down these excellent means by which they may win to it, and doubtless the marks and evidences that are registrate in the Scripture of a gracious state, do assure us, that assurance is attainable. 7. What are the ends of the Sacraments but that our assurance may be confirmed, and that our faith may be strengthned, the two Sacraments are the two great Seals of Heaven that are put to the Charter of the Covenant.

Now as to the application, & the more full improvement of this first point, I shall only offer these considerations, 1. I wold have it taken notice of, that though grace and assurance be two lovers, yet there is no such band of union between them, that the one cannot consist without the other; A Christian may have the real grace of God, and yet walk in darkness and no light; a Christian may be going to Heaven, and yet that word oftentimes in his mouth, *I am cut off from*

from thy sight; yea, are there not even some who have had assurance, and some time a day have been admitted to draw that conclusion, *I am my beloveds, and his desire is towards me*, who are now under darkness concerning their interest, and in much bitterness of spirit, do sometimes cry out, *My hope and my strength is perished from the Lord.* But therefore, let me say this one word, both to weak ones who never had assurance, and deserted ones who have lost it; when ye miss assurance, beware of drawing such negative conclusions concerning your graces, but when ye sit in darkness and see no light, *Trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay your selves upon your God*; that is, when ye cannot reach the faith of assurance, be much in maintaining of adherence: remember *Jobs* divinity, *Though he should kill me, yet will I trust in him*; and consider that sweet word, *He will keep them in perfect peace whose hearts are stayed on him.*

My second consideration is, That since assurance is attainable, ye would study to find out and remove those things that doth hinder you from attaining unto it. And that we may help you in this, we conceive that the obstructions of a Christians assurance, are especially in these two, 1. Our misdoing of the Lords dealing towards us. And, 2. Our unrenewed and unfruitable dealing towards him.

Of the first sort we shall lay before you these five, The first is, want of favourable returns of prayer; this oftentimes maketh a Christian to debate his interest, and call in question his evidences, *Lam.* 3. 8. compared with *verse* 18. *I cry and shout, but he shutteth out my prayers*: and this is the conclusion of that dispensation, *verse* 18. *My hope and my strength is perished from the Lord*: and this is especially occasioned when the Christian is most serious and fervent in prayer, and then he meeteth not with a return, this maketh them exceedingly debate their interest. And I confess, it is

a sad dispensation to meet with a silent Christ in prayer; but yet that needeth not make a believer question all, and debate the reality of his interest in God, since the dearest of all children of the kingdom have been so dealt with, even a *David*, Psal. 22. 1. *Cryed night and day without silence*, and is not heard; but cryeth out, *why art thou so far from helping, and from the words of my roaring*; yea, that passage may relate to him who was *the root and off-spring of David*, for even he was so dealt with, and had not presently a sensible return, when he had prayed thrice, *that the cup might pass from him.*

Secondly, the want of sensible enlargement and liberty in prayer, that he never goeth to his knees, but his heart begineth to die like a stone within him, then he cryeth forth that word, 2 *Cor.* 3. 17. *Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty*: and sure if I had the Spirit of the Lord, I would have liberty in the exercise of prayer; and that this is a rise of the disputing of our interest is clear from *Ps.* 77. 4. compared with verse 7, & 9. saith *David*, I *am sore troubled that I cannot speak*, I have no liberty in prayer, I never go to God in prayer, but (as it were) my tongue sticketh to the roof of my mouth; he from hence draweth that conclusion, *Hath God forgotten to be gracious, and hath he in wrath shut up his tender mercies for ever?* I confesse this also is a sad dispensation to meet with an absent and vailed Christ in prayer; so that we can never go to seek God in secret, but we may write this upon our prayers, *He is gone, he is gone*, especially when we have lost that liberty that formerly we have had: and therefore is *Davids* perplexity much heightned, *verse* 5, 6. from his *remembring his song in the night, and his calling to mina the years of ancient times*: yet we may remember how soon *David* wrote his retractions, as to that sad conclusion, *I said this is my infirmity*; ver. 10. and so should we do when upon

on every straitning in prayer, we begin to question all the Lords kindness towards us.

A third obstruction of assurance, is a Christians wrestling with his corruptions painfully and seriously and yet not meeting with any sensible victory over them, but upon the contrair, their corruptions seem to be stronger, and they themselves seem to be weaker, and then it is, they strengthen their misbelief, but that word, 1 *Joh.* 3. 3. *Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure*: And indeed, this is a knot that is not easily loosed, but when he seeth his idols and corruptions prevailing over him, he will cry out, *I am gone, and there is no hope in Israel concerning this thing*, and yet this also is a word in haste, *Paul* hath registrate himself a standing witness even after he was a chosen vessel, *Rom.* 7. How strangely a child of God may be born down with a *body of death* even under most serious wrestlings against it; And therefore if thou seriously maintain that combat thogh thou do not sensibly prevail, thou hast no reason upon that ground to weaken thy assurance.

Fourthly, when a christian is put to more then ordinarly outward affliction, when God doth dispense sadly unto them in outward things, they then begin to call in question their interest, and dispute their assurance, this is clear, by comparing *Lament.* 3. verse 18. with the preceeding words, where speaking of the sad dispensations they meet with, he draweth that conclusion in verse 18. *My hope and my strength is perished from the Lord*, and *Joh.* 2. 4. where he draweth that conclusion from such a promise, *I am now cast out of thy sight*, the Devil he taketh *Eliphaz* divinity and presents it to a Christian; *Call now if there be any to answer thee, and to which of the Saints wilt thou go?* As if he had said, did thou ever know a Christian afflicted, so as thou art afflicted, and so he would have *Job* to quite his integrity; But yet we

know all these blessed ones, for all their afflictions were dear unto the Lord, and had their interest secure in him, yea, *as many as he loveth, he doth rebuke and chasten*, and it is the bastards and not sons on whom he will not bestow a rod, and therefore we ought not to quarrel our interest because of afflictions.

And lastly, The rise of a Christians discouragement and that which hindereth their assurance, is, when their former experience of the manifestations of God doth not relish to them, and when the promises upon which they have built become tasteless unto them *as the white of an egge*, and when they meet not with God in Ordinances, but these become lifeless, when these three rise together upon them; their case becomes very perplexed oftentimes: and this also seemed to have been *Davids* case, *Psal.* 77. When *he remembred his song in the night, and the days of old*, and yet had no sweetness in them, then he breaketh forth into these bitter complaints which are there expressed: but yet as we said before, this was his infirmity, and there is no reason for a Christian to question his interest upon such account; because the Ordinances are not at all times alike lively even to the best, and the Lord is not always present, but though sometimes the *candle of the Lord doth shine upon his head*, yet at other times he is necessitate to cry out, *O that it were with me as in months past.*

The second sort of obstructions of a Christians assurance, I mean such as flow from our untender dealing towards God, are,

First, A guilty conscience, that is a remarkable word, 1 *Tim.* 3, 9. *Holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience*, It telleth us, that this excellent grace of Faith cannot bide, but in a cleanly lodging, even in *a pure conscience*, and when a Christian setteth about to believe, he will know how a guilty conscience will flee in his face, and cry out, *O adventure not to believe, dare*

dare thou believe, the guiltiness of a Christians conscience maketh him oft to cry out, *Touch not the mountain lest thou be thrust thorow*: and I tell you three disadvantages of a guilty conscience, 1. It obstructeth a Christians boldness in making applications to Christ; his heart saith *close*, and his necessity saith *close*; but his guilty conscience cryeth out, *O stand back* and do not *close*. 2. A guilty conscience oftentimes it hindreth the discoveries of Christ to the soul, and doth so affright and terrifie, yea, it will so sting and bite us, that when he revealeth himself, we cannot take notice, when he would lay on a plaister, our souls will tear it off, *and refuse to be comforted*. 3. It doth exceedingly obstruct our going about duty. O but our soul moves slowly in the paths of God when we are under the power of a guilty conscience.

The second obstruction is, That we are not much in the exercise of tenderness. O but if a Christian were tender, and if in every step of his life he desired *to set Christ before his eyes*, he would easily win to much assurance, according to that word, *Isai.* 64. 5, *Thou meetest him that rejoycest and worketh righteousness, and those that remember thee in thy ways*; Would ye know the assured Christian, it is the tender Christian: that Christian that doth not crucifie convictions, the Christian that breaketh not resolutions, the Christian that doth not sit calls and opportunities to prayer, the Christian that saith not of any sin, *it is a little one*, or the Christian that searcheth always, watcheth always, examineth always, and is always casting out sin, and that is the assured Christian.

The third objection is, The want of the exercise of the grace of fear, we are not much under this disposition, to fear the Lord and his goodness: this is clear from that word, *Psal.* 25. 14. *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew to*

them his Covenant. I think there are these two great evidences, that much of the power of godliness is gone from some of our hearts: we fear God no more, nor if we were his companion: and we fear our selves no more nor if we had not a deceitful heart within us, we neither fear God nor our selves, and that speaketh that much of the life of Religion is lost amongst us. The fifth thing that doth much obstruct our assurance is, much *worldly-mindedness*, and eager pursuit after the things of a present life, that is remarkable, 2 *Cor.* 4. verse last, compared with 2 *Cor.* 5.1. *We look not unto the things that are seen*, that is, we are not much taken up with the things of a present world, which the men of the world seek and delight themselves in; & it is subjoyned, *For we know if this our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a house not made with hands*, so we see assurance and mortification to the world are much knit together. Would ye know where to find our hearts, the most part of us are conversing with idols of the world; would ye know where to find our hearts, they are amongst the vanities of the world. O how true is that word, *Psa.* 39. *Man walks in a vain shew*; what is man in all his actings, but as one walking in a long galery that is set about with pictures, gazing on these things and saluting them all, as if they were living *Kings* and *Queens*, and great persons that could do him good; & so our pursuing after the world, is nothing else but a *dead shadow* pursuing after *dead shadows*, a man that is but a short living shadow pursuing after vanity and nothing, and thus he fools away his time, forgetting to make sure *the one thing necessary.*

5. Want of distinct apprehensions of these three, the infinite love of Christ, the infinite power of Christ, & the infinite wisdom of Christ; there is not an objection O christians that ye have from the multitude of your sins, but it may be drowned in infinite love, there is not

not an objection that ye have from the strength of your idols, but it may be drowned in that immense ocean of the infinite power of Christ; there is not an objection ye have from your wants, or about your evil nature, but ye may drown it in the infinite wisdom & goodness of Christ, and there can be nothing against your assurance, but may be sweetly answered also from these rightly applyed, taken up and rested on by the soul. The last thing which hindereth our assurance is, the smalness of the measure of grace that we have attained; for when grace is smal, it is hard to be discerned, and therefore, if ye would have assurance learn not to lye still and dispute, but to rise up and to increase our stock, and then you shall know ye are rich: *Grow in grace and in the knowledge of God*; and by this, *ye shall know if ye follow on to know the Lord.*

The third consideration is, that assurance is not bestowed at all times but there are some special times and seasons when God giveth a Christian a broad sight of his interest, and I shall but name these.

The first is, when he is first converted, and Christ and he joyns hands together, even then sometimes the best rob is put upon the prodigal son, and the fatted calf is killed, and a ring is put upon his hand, and shooes upon his feet, *Acts* 9. 17. *Paul* meeteth with assurance immediately after his conversion, 1 *Jo.* 2.12,14. *I write unto you little children; because ye have known the Father*; and before that in the 12. *verse, I write unto you little children, because your sins are forgiven you*; so that when a Christian is brought unto Christ, he will (as it were) lead them to the Registers of Heaven, and say, friend come and see, here is your name written from eternity: But do not mistake me, I do not say this is always so, but these whom Christ converteth throgh the thunderings of the Law, these most frequently meet with intimation of the pardon of their sins & peace of God, even at their first ac-

if ye ask at them when they were begotten to a lively hope, they would say that word that the blind man once said, *One thing I know, I was once blind, but now see*, but for the time & the day, I know not when it was.

The second time is, when they are wrestling with God like Princes in prayer, and waiching unto that exercise, *Dan. 9. 23*, compared with the preceding verse, he being much and serious in prayer, doth meet with that word from heaven: *O man greatly beloved*, or as the word is, *O man of desires*, and *Acts 10. 2, 3, 4.* when *Cornelius* is much in the exercise of watching and prayer, he seeth a vision and getteth intimation of his peace with God: and *Jacob* when he was wrestling with God, *Gen. 32.* he hath that testimony given him, *Thou hast as a Prince wrestled with God and prevailed.*

The third thing is, when a Christian is passing through the gates of death, and is upon the borders of Eternity: I desire not to be mistaken in this neither; I know some Christians are led to heaven thorow a dark entrance, so as they never see a blink of the countenance of Christ, until the day come that they get him in their arms eternally within his Fathers house. Some Christians when they go through the gates of death, they may be disputing of this question, *where am I going?* But this is certain, that sometimes, yea, oftentimes Christ will dispense a broad sight of a Christians interest unto him at the day of death, *2. Sam. 23. 5.* when was it that *David* sang that song, which hath strengthned thousands in the very jaws of death, *God hath made with me an everlasting covenant*, was it not when death was shaking hands with him? and *2. Tim. 4. 8.* when was it that Paul sang that song, *I have fought the good fight of Faith, I have finished my course, henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness*, was it not even then, when

and when was it when old *Simeon* did sing that blessed song, *Luk. 2. 29. Now, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation*, was it not within a step of death as it were, he went to heaven with Christ in his arms, or rather in his heart he carried Christ with him, and found Christ before him, and so death to *Simeon* was a change of his place, and not a change of his company.

The fourth time is, when he is to be put to some hard and difficult duty: Before *Abraham* be put to forsake his native land, and become a stranger and a wanderer, he meeteth with sweet intimation of his interest, *Gen. 12. 2. I will make of thee a great nation*, and *verse 7. The Lord appeared unto Abraham*, and before *Jeremiah* be sent a preacher unto a rebellious people, *he will* have that word spoken unto him, *I know thee before thou wast brought forth.*

The fifth time is, when a Christian hath done some singular act of obedience, when *Abraham* had obeyed the Lord, and was content to offer up his *Isaac*, he meeteth with a sight of his interest and covenant renewed to him with an oath, *Gen. 22. 16. By my self I have sworn, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withholden thy son, even thy only son, blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying, I will multiply thee as the stars of heaven.*

The sixth time is when a Christian is to meet with hard trials, difficulties and afflictions in the world; then they usually meet with assurance, and so *Gen. 28. 14, 15, 16.* before *Jacob* go to serve *Laban*, he meeteth with intimation of his peace with God.

The seventh time is, when a Christian is under persecution and affliction, then will the Lord give a word from heaven to comfort him, and assure him of his fatherly love and mercy. When was it that Christ [illegible] to his disciples *Joh.*

when

verse 27. *My peace I leave with you, my peace I give you,* was it not when he himself was to leave them to troublesome and sorrowful days, in a persecuting world.

The eighth time is at some solemn Ordinances and approaches to God, the days of a Communion to a tender Christian have been sweet days, when Christ hath come to the soul, and said, *Behold me, behold me.* I think the eleven Apostles met with much assurance of their interest in Christ at the Communion they were at with him: O what sweet intimations were these, *This is my body which is broken for you*, and *this cup is the new Testament in my blood shed for you*, and a little after, *you are they which have continued with me in my tentation, and I appoint unto you a kingdom.*

We come now to the second point which we proposed from the words, *viz.* That as assurance is a thing which may be attained; so to seek after it, it is a necessary duty: let me not be mistaken, as if I had said, the having of assurance were simply necessary to Salvation; no, that were a Doctrine as comfortless upon the other hand, as the Popish doctrine of the impossibility of assurance is upon the other: But the thing I say, is, that the Christian seeking after assurance, and his real endeavouring to attain unto it, is a necessary command of God, which he hath bound upon the consciences of his Children among other gospel duties; And certainly, we need go no further for the clearing of this then the Text it self, what meaneth these peremptory injunctions, *Examine your selves whether ye be in the faith or not: Prove your selves: Know ye not, &c.* but if ye will ye may add that word, 2 *Pet.* 1. verse 5, and 10. compared, what can be more expressly commanded, and more strongly pressed, then that Christians should bend their utmost endeavours for attaining unto this blessed condition

dition of assurance: *Give diligence, yea, give all diligence, yea, the rather give all diligence to make your calling and election sure.*

From this, we shall only lay before you these considerations, 1. If the seeking after assurance be a necessary duty, then these three things are most lamentable. First, That there are so many in this generation *who are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their iniquity*; they flatter themselves with a rotten assurance, that hath no other foundation but their own imagination, they never knew since the first day they were Baptized and did begin to profess Christ, what it was to mortifie one lust, nor seriously to wrestle against one temptation, and yet they want not a strong perswasion of their interest in Christ: But ah, will ye stand in aw, lest ye meet with such a dreadful disappointment, as (when ye think ye are in the very gate of heaven) even then to fall backwards to the very bottom of hel, and when ye expect a kindly welcome from the Lord of Glory, as one who thinks you have been in covenant with him this many years, yet meet with that dreadful summons, *Depart from me ye cursed, I know you not.*

2. How sad may we be upon this account, that howbeit assurance be an attainable thing, and a great many dare not say they have attained it; yet so little diligence is used in pursuing after it; is it not very lamentable, that many of you to whom I am speaking, since first ye gave up your names to Christ in a visible way, and were reputed amongst the generation of the seekers of his face, scarce ever set a day or an hour a part to examine whether ever indeed you were in Christ or not. Alace, is heaven of so little moment, is the having or wanting all the enjoyments which are there of so smal concernment to you, that you will not be at the pains as once to enquire after your interest in the matter? what if any of you were but possessors of a thou-

thousand pound, and your interest or right unto it uncertain and questionable, would not your sleep depart from you, and your rest be unquiet till you had made it more secure? What think you shall the men of this generation answer in the day of the Lord for neglecting *that one thing necessary*; when they have been so vexing themselves *about many things*, and have been so serious in so many consultations to make sure a worm eaten portion in a perishing world; that the whole wit of men and angels cannot secure for one moment? It is certain, the root of all sloathfulness is Atheism. It is not possible that we believe as really there is a heaven, as we believe there is an earth, or that the world to come is as real as that which is present; or else it must be a strange power in these lusts that keeps us captive, that we are never suffered to think upon eternity, nor to ask where we must lodge when this cottage we carry about shall fall about our ears. O will ye think upon it, how serious and pressing that command is, 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. *Give all diligence, to make your calling and election sure.* When the Lord saith *Give all diligence*, will ye give no diligence, and when he saith, *make your calling and election sure*, will ye leave all upon uncertainty? *I said to the foolish deal not so foolishly.*

3. It is most lamentable, that since assurance is attainable, yet men live contentedly under the want thereof How strange is it that many are so seldom on their knees complaining of their uncertainty? If Christ were precious unto you, would it be so? I am sure there are some of us here that have had the name of Christians, I know not how long, that never had one sad thoght about the want of assurance: when we look upon the desolations, vastations and plunderings in the world, how many of us can cry out, *They have taken away my gods, and what have I more?* But when we speak of heaven, we care not who deprive us of our portion there.

there. I wil not limit the Lord, nor determine what he may do, but believe it, it is one to a thousand, if many christians of this age have a pleasant night & comfortable closing of their eyes, they are such undervaluers of assurance: I may fear that lamentation shal be heard upon the death-beds of many, *O poor wretched wandering soul where art thou going?* and it is no wonder it come to this, when we are so long in beginning to ask the question. And now I close with this one thing, that I think beyond all question, the souls that live contentedly under the want of assurance, are *the careless daughters that dweleth at ease*: Christ and they are at a remarkable distance, it must be a cold winter and dark night (at best) as to their present fellowship with God.

A second consideration from this point is, that if the seeking after assurance be so necessary a duty, then let me beseech you to ponder with your selves what means are fit for you to use that ye may attain it, and if ye enquire what these means are, I shall only lay before you some few,

1. That ye would be much in the exercise of faith, I mean the direct acts of faith, whereby the sinners from his sense and feeling of his wants, layeth hold on Jesus Christ, closing with him, and leaning upon him for a full supply out of his fulness: for indeed, there are two great faults amongst the Lords people, some do seek assurance of faith, before ever they seek to have faith. 2. Some are much more taken up in debating their evidences, whether they be real or not, then they are in strengthning their evidences, so that most of their time is spent in questioning; O! is this a real evidence of assurance? whereas more actual believing in Christ and gripping to the promises, and less disputing, were the shorter and surer way, that word is most clear, *Eph.* 1. 13. *After ye believed, ye were sealed with the spirit of promise*, that is, ye got assu-

assurance, but not before ye believed, and ye know it is said, *Mat.* 9. 2. And *when Jesus saw their faith, he said, Son, be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee*, so then it is clear, that to be much in believing, is the neareſt way to aſſurance.

2. Ye would be much in believing the general truths and promiſes of the Goſpel, and frequently meditating of them; al aſſurance is by a practical ſylogiſm; the firſt whereof muſt needs be a Scripture truth; And certainly, the firm aſſent to that truth, and the ſouls delightful meditation on it, is often bleſſed of the Lord, as a ſpecial mean whereby the conſcience is helped to make the aſſumption, and alſo to bring forth the concluſion; For inſtance, we ſee with what ſtrength of affection *Paul* acteth his faith on that word, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. *This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, Chriſt Jeſus came to ſave ſinners*, and preſently ye ſee what followeth on it, *Of whom I am the chief*, then is his aſſurance; for doubtleſs he meaned that he was the chief *of ſaved ſinners*; yea, certainly, a ſinner thus exerciſing himſelf, will often find ſo much ſweetneſs in the general truths, that he cannot but put to his own name.

3. Be diligent in the exereiſe of all ſpiritual graces and Chriſtian duties, that this is among the beſt means of attaining to aſſurance, is manifeſt from 2 *Pet.* 1. *Give all diligence to make your calling and election ſure*; for indeed it is very obſervable, that the diligence there mentioned, is not a diligence in diſputing and queſtioning about our election; but a diligence in the practice of duties and graces, as is clear from verſe 5. *Give all diligence* (ſaith the Apoſtle) Wherefore in adding *to your faith vertue, to your vertue knowledge, & to knowledge temperance, &c.* and then verſe 8. *If ye do all theſe things, ye ſhall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*: he doth not ſay in the knowledge of the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt* ſimply, but of *our* Lord Jeſus; importing that the reſult of diligence in theſe graces, ſhall be the knowledge of Chriſt as ours, and of our intereſt in him; and then he addeth (upon the other hand) *he that laketh theſe things, is blind and cannot ſee afar off*, this is, he cannot ſee far in any ſpiritual matter, and ſo not in the matter of his intereſt. O therefore, think not that ye will get aſſurance by lying down with the ſluggard upon your bed, or by your formal prayer, or your anxious debates, but if ever ye come to aſſurance, ye muſt be ſtriving, as in an agony, for ſo the word importeth, which is uſed to expreſs our diligence in Chriſtian duties.

4. As ye would be diligent, ſo if ever ye would come to aſſurance, ye would be tender and circumſpect in your walking, that is a clear word, *Pſ.* 50. laſt verſe, *To him that ordereth his converſation aright, will I ſhew the ſalvation of God*, and *Iſa.* 32. *The effect of righteouſneſs is peace and aſſurance for ever.* All the contender walk that many of us have, it is no wonder to ſee us walk in darkneſs, ſuch ſtinking groſs vapors that ariſe off our converſation, cannot but engender clouds that hinder us from ſeeing God; and certainly ſuch pearls as *Aſſurance*, is not given to dogs and ſwine leſt they tread upon them.

SERMON VIII.

2 Cor. 13. 5. *Examine your ſelves whether ye be in the Faith? prove your own ſelves: know ye not your own ſelves, how that Jeſus Chriſt is in you, except ye be reprobates.*

THere are two great ballances into which men do weigh themſelves; there are ſome that weigh themſelves in the ballance of deceit, who think that in all their labours there is no iniquity to be found, yet God who is the weigher of the ſpi-

spirit, when he shall weigh them will engrave this upon their forehead, *Thou art weighed in the ballance, and art found light*: O but there are many who approve themselves, whom Christ shall never approve; There are many that call God *Father*, whom he will not call *Children*, and many that call Christ *Husband*, whom he will not call *Spouse*. 2. There are some who weigh themselves in the ballance of the Sanctuary, who upon solid and most spiritual grounds do draw this conclusion, *I am my beloveds, and his desire is towards me*, who can with boldness and confidence look Christ in the face, *and say, thou art mine*, and with much spiritual confidence, take him in their arms, and cry out, he shall be eternally mine; and sure there is not a more pleasant life than to be taking him every day in our arms, and to be crying out, *Am I not made up in him, am I not not made up in him.*

Before I come to the words, there are three great and most soul-concerning errours amongst the Christians of these days, that we desire ye may consider: 1. There are many that are more desirous to know what they are, then what they should do, there are some are more taken up to know whether they be justified and sanctified, then to be indeed justified and sanctified; and they are more desirous to know if they be in Christ, then indeed to be in him: and therefore we find many who do spend a great deal more time disputing that question, *whether am I in Christ or not*, then they do in using of those means by which real union and communion with him may be attained; but oh, will ye once study more to be in him, and that shall be the shortest way to attain to the knowledge of your being in him. The second great errour is, that some are more desirous to know what they shold do, then they are desirous to do what they know. Are there not many of us that have this question, *wherewith shall I come before the Lord*, and yet we do not know his Commandment is with us, that we *should do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.* A third errour is, that we are more in talking of Christ, then in believing in him, or closing with him; Some of us think to win to heaven by discourses, if we can talk of Christ, we think all is without debate or controversie; but alace, there are many who are sweet talkers of Christ, that are cursing him this day in Hell. And I would say this by the way, if there be any of you, that have win to any soul-perswasion of your interest in Christ, I intreat you if ye can put the conclusion upon record, that in such a day of such a month, and such a year of God, you did then win to cry out, *I am my beloveds, and he is mine*; it seemeth to have been *Davids* practice, *Psal.* 16. 2. *O my soul thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord*; and it was *Jeremiahs* practice, *Lam.* 31. 24. *The Lord is my portion, saith my soul*, I say, ye should even mark that conclusion as they did, that when tentations come, and begin to assault you, you may look to your record that ye have set down, and be ashamed to misbelieve. It is true, that for a little while our assurance at best will be but ebbing and flowing, but I hope ere long we shall be above the reach of misbelief, and above the reach of fears, I hope ere long we shall dispute no more, we shall be jealous no more, and we shall question our interest no more, when all our disputings and questionings shal be sweetly drowned in that infinite ocean of eternal delight and fruition of God. O *expectants of heaven, expectants of heaven*, are ye not looking after this day, are ye not looking after it: I know not what we do here, if we be not walking forward every day: he is upon his way, O to see him, we will even stand and wonder at him: I hope the day is coming when we shall never lose our grips of Christ any

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more, he is coming, he is coming; and I think if Christ would give a pass, we would long to go hence; O what streets are these that are there, is there any here who is groaning for heaven, be of good comfort, I hope ere long he shall come, he shall come and wash all tears from your eyes.

Now at the last occasion, when we spake upon these words, we told you that there was five or six things which we intended to consider in them. The first was, that such a thing as a distinct and well grounded perswasion of our interest in Christ was attainable: and of this we have already spoken. The second thing is, That concerning this noble and excellent thing assurance, there are many mistakes among the people of God, & to make this evident, it is clear first in this Text, from that serious & accurate search in this matter, which the Apostle putteth these people unto, as we cleared unto you from the force of the words, & his doubling of these exhortations, *try your own selves, prove your own selves.* 2. From the many commands which the Lord hath left upon record that we should not be mistaken concerning our assurance, 1 *Cor.* 3. 18. *Let no man deceive himself.* Gal. 6. 3. *If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself*, and therefore doth the Apostle add, *Let every one prove his own work*, and verse 7. *Be not deceived.* 3. The point is clear from this, that we find in Scripture many who have been mistaken most dreadfully in the matter of their assurance, *Hos.* 8. *Israel cryeth out, my God we know thee*, and yet Israel was in a great mistake: for in the words following, *ver.* 3. *Israel had cast off the thing that was good*: and *Pro.* 30. *ver.* 12. we find there a *generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed away from their iniquities.* 4. It is clear from this, that it is a great design of Satan, the great deceiver, that we might be mistaken

ken about that noble & weighty point of our assurance, of being in Christ: is there not a power given unto him from Christ to deceive the nations? I may say, that in no point doth he more prevail to deceive us then in this, if profanity kill its *thousands*, delusion kills ten *thousands*, and this delusion its *twenty thousands*. Lastly, doth not this prove how much a Christian may be mistaken in the matter of his assurance, even that name which is given to our hearts, *Jer.* 17. 9. *It is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?* no doubt this may shew us (though there were no more) how ready our hearts are to deceive us, making us to entertain a delusion in stead of truth, and imbrac. a shadow instead of a substance.

The next thing that we have to speak to you upon this point, is to show you where these mistakes do ly, and what are these false grounds by which so many do deceive their own souls in this matter; and here there are two sorts of persons whom we must inform. 1. There be some who upon most unwarrantable grounds do conclude; that their interest in Christ is sure, when indeed it is not. 2. There be some (upon the other hand) who from sad mistakes of themselves and the Lords dealing towards them, deny that they have an interest, when indeed they have. The first sort are the worst, and in the most dangerous condition, and they build upon these six false foundations which we beseech them to consider.

The first is, their supposed sensible enjoyments, some Christians in these times especially, do meet with some flashes of light & joy which they have not been (it may be) acquainted with before, or at least not in such a measure, or in such a sensible manner, and upon this they presently cry forth, *My beloved is mine, and I am his.* I shall not dispute with such about the reality of these enjoyments, or how they come to know that these are such as proceed from a saving

work

work of the Spirit of grace, but waving that debate; give me leave to say this much of all enjoyments and sensible manifestations (as to the point in hand) they may be sometime a good supporter to underprop a christians assurance when it totereth, but never a good foundation whereon he may lay the first stone of that building: and therefore he is the wiser christian who first tryeth the reality of his interest in Christ by other blessed fruits of righteousness and holiness before he trust the reality of sensible enjoyments, how sweet or comfortable soever they may seem to be.

2. Some build their assurance upon the number and bulk of their duties, without considering the frame of their spirit, and the principle from which they flow; they use prayer, & reading, and conference, they wait upon ordinances, & are always there where the meat is thought to be most powerful: and upon this they take up themselves in their own arms, blessing themselves, as that poor man, *Luke* 18. *I fast twice a week, I pay tithes of all that I possess*: but alace, they do not consider that they *do but build their houses upon the sand* which the first blast of a temptation will overturn, because not only all our duties when weighed in the ballance may be found light, but when put to the tryal may be found empty, dead and lifeless things, wherein the Lords soul can have no pleasure.

3. Some are mistaken in the matter of their assurance, by judging themselves by the law, not knowing or not regarding the spiritual meaning thereof: *Paul* was a gallant man (in his own apprehension) when he was without the law, that is, when he knew not the spiritual meaning of the law, he thought himself the most eminent Saint in all his Nation, & as he sheweth us, *Phil.* 3. he could compare with any of them, but when the Lord opened his eyes, we see he put himself last in the roll of Saints, and first in the roll of sinners, *Rom.* 7. *He was alive without the Law*, that is, he thought himself living and reigning above his sins; but *when the Commandment came*, that is, when it came to his knowledge, and he saw the spirituality of it, *sin revived and he died*, then he saw how that he had triumphed before the victory, he saw all his sins alive, and as it were, risen from the dead, and himself a dead man, lost and undone in the estate he was in. O how many are there amongst us in *Pauls* first condition? *alive without the Law*. O how many destroy themselves with this, they think there is not a sin forbidden in all the Law of God but only *Ten*, but alace, thou fool, thou *erreſt in this not knowing the Scriptures*: Should thou not judge thy self by that spiritual extent of the meaning of the Law, & that divine commentary which the Apostle *James* hath set forth upon it, wherein he sheweth thee, *That if thou be guilty of the breach of one point, thou art guilty of all*; and by that infallible exposition which Christ himself the blessed Law-giver hath set down, *Mat.* 6. whereby he discovereth adultery in the heart and in the eye. O atheist, thou must take up the ten Commandments, & subscribe *guilty* to them all: and let me tell you this, if ye will subscribe the Law to Christ, He will subscribe the Gospel to you; if thou wilt sincerely say, *I am guilty*, he will as sincerely say, I have pardoned; *Son or Daughter be of good courage, thy sins are forgiven thee.*

Fourthly, Some build their assurance upon the apprehensions of the hatred of some particular sin, that belt it was sometimes as their right hand, or their eye, et now they can pluck it out, or cut it off: But O, will ou but consider, some sins may be made weak, & the ul (thogh not upon a right principle) brought to hate and to cry unto it, *get you hence*, and yet the interest Satan may be strong in the heart. The fifth mistake of many who judge themselves, because they go a eater length then the former, and are kept free from gross outbreaking sin; how many are there who go

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sleeping down to hell with this ; I am no drunkard, nor adulterer,,nor murderer,no thief nor whore:this long have I lived in the town , and they were never born that can say, I have wronged them;and so they adventure their soul upon this,they never committed any gross sin.I beseech you be not deceived:remember how that wretched man did speed, *Luke* 18. 11. *I am no extortioner , nor adulterer,nor even as this publican, &c.* poor creature that he was , Christ giveth not a testimonial to every one who take it for themselves;& I must tell some of you , that there may be desperate atheists withontGod,and withoutChrist in the world, &yet be free from gross outbreaking sins;Ido not think but many of these who crucified the Lord of Glory, were keeped from other grosssins;what knowest thou, O man that there Is more favour shewed to thee, in that thou art keeped from some gross sins, when yet thou hast a desperately wicked heart,then is shewed to the devil, when some links of his chain are taken in, and restraining power keeping him from his outmost bounds,God wil sometimes restrain a hypocrite, or a heathen, as it was laid of *Abimelech, and God restrained him*: there may be a cord put upon thy jaws, when thou art far from having the power of conquering grace,it may be also,that all that abstaining from outward out-breakings,proceedeth but from outward disadvantages,& not from any fear of God,or respect to him, yea,not so much as from the fear of any eternal punishment : are there not many amongst us,believe it, there are many that take away shame , and Church-censure; or civil punishment, and other inconveniencies of that sort,and set a thousand hills before them, they would not be keeped back from one sin,but would take their hazard of them all: Yea,is it not want of tentation and nothing else,that hindereth many from gross out-breakings; if Satan would come but with a kindled match, there wanteth no more to

set tongue and hands,and all on fire of hell.Owretched soul,do but ask thy self how often thou hast tempted Satan, when he would not tempt thee,and how often thou hast followed a tentation when it fled from thee; yea, when the Lord hath hedged up thy ways that thou could not overtake thy lovers,how many a long look hast thou sent after them,& what lustings of thy spirit within, and do ye thing that heart sins are nothing, although thou had no out-breakings, what were the matter of that:if thou had not a tongue,thou would break the third Command , and *curse God in thy heart*; if thou had not an eye, thou could commit adultery *in thy heart* : if thou had not a hand thou might commit murder *in thy heart*. O therefore build not thy assurance upon this,that thou hast made clean the outside of the platter when yet all filthiness is within. The sixth false foundation upon which I am sure too many build their assurance, is their gifts and parts, especially upon these two, the gift of Prayer, & the gift ofKnowledge; but believe it,,it is not much to be a Christian in tongue , but it is much to be a Christian in heart;know you not that this wil cast out many, *we have prophesied in thy name,and in thy name cast out devils.* No doubt these had been excellent flourishers,and if the tongue would have done it,they had been highly advanced, but yet ye see these men meet with a *depart from me, I know you not.* Ah think upon it , he is not the best Christian that is the best Orator.Religion that is pure, and undefiled,consisteth more in the affection, then in the tongue, and more in practice then in profession. I beseech you when you cast up your evidences of assurance, consider how well you have done , and not how well ye have spoken.

The seventh false ground whereby many do misjudge themselves, is, their supposed peace of conscience: O saith one,my conscience doth not charge me

with

with any thing, I thank God I have a quiet mind and nothing troubles me; but ah poor wretch, wilt thou tell me, may not the strong man be within, and therefore all is at peace? a dumb conscience and a seared conscience, is a dreadful plague. Knowest thou not that many say, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine own heart: and because they say so, the Lord shall not spare them, but all the curses in this Book shall lye upon them.

The eighth false ground is, the approbation of other christians, so that if they have the approbation of some such exercised christians, or if they have the approbation of such a Minister, that is the way to silence all their disputings. O cursed be the person that putteth his trust in men who are liars; O man or woman, let me assure you this, if ye had a Testimonial to present to Christ subscribed with all the hands of every Christian that ever ye were acquainted with, this will be enough for Christ to reject you and it both, *I know you not, and therefore depart from me.* There is an emphasis in that word: *I know you not*, as if he had said, it is not much though all others know you, if I know you not.

The ninth false ground is their diligent observing the Ordinances, their going to preachings, and their going to Communion, *and running too and fro*, pretending this end *that knowledge may be increased*; but know it, there are many that have sitten down at a table with Christ here, that shall never sit down at the higher Table with him hereafter: Are there not many that shal say unto Christ in the great day, *Have we not eaten and drunken in thy presence*, unto whom Christ shall say, *depart from me I know you not.*

The tenth false foundation, which is the strong delusion of Atheists, of which, no doubt there are many here to day, is the building of their eternal happiness upon this, I never met with a cross, I never knew what it was to have a sad day: but to thee I shal only say, it may

may be thou never had a joyful day, neither in all thy sinful pleasures under the Sun; but let me tell thee, it is bad divinity to conclude, therefore I am in the way to heaven: It may be it were better reasoning, (and thogh I wil not say it, yet it cometh nearer truth) I had never a cross, therefore I am going on in the way to hel. O wilt thou but consider, what if he be *heaping coals upon thy head, and fatting thee to the day of slaughter?* What if this word be your portion? *Eat, drink and be merry while you are here, for to morrow thou must certainly die*; what are all your pleasures, and what are all your honours, and what are all your possessions? What are they all? are they not a bone cast unto a dog? the Lord valueth them not, What if they be *the fatting of you to the day of slaughter?*

Now as to these who deny they have any interest in Christ, when indeed they have, they commonly deceive themselves and vex their own spirits upon some of these or the like mistakes. 1. some judge of their estate, by their present frame and condition, so that if they be in an evil frame, they begin & raze the foundations, & to such I would only say, that every change of condition doth not speak a change of estate, a child of God may be in much darkness & under much deadness, and yet a child of God still, *Psal.* 73. It was an evil frame to be as a beast before God, and yet even then he keepeth grips and holdeth him by the right hand: *Job* was often in a very evil frame, and yet he holdeth fast his integrity, and why then should thou upon that account cast away thine?

2. Christians judge their estate by dispensations, they think every change of dispensations, speaketh a change of estate, and if Christ do not smile always, we know not what it is to keep up the Faith of our Interest: and indeed this is a great fault among Christians, that when they cannot read love in the beautiful face of Christ, they think it is not in his heart. What thogh

he change his dispensation,doth that speak fora chang of thy estate? Christ cannot change his voice to us,but we think he changeth his heart, Christ cannot speak to us in the whirle wind;but we cry out,why art thou become unto me as an enemy?O shall precious Christ be thus mistaken.

The third ground of mistake about our interest in Christ is, that we judge of our estate by what we are in our selves,and not by what we are in Christ. When aChristian beginneth to judge & search himself,he can find nothing in himself ; but what is the matter of doubting, & therefore thinks it high presumption to think himself a Believer : But O fool , can thou not look to Christ,and cry out,though in my self I be nothing,yet in him I am all;Oif Christians knew to judge of themselves,by what they are in Christ,and not by what they are in themselves , that with one eye they might look to themselves, & cry out,*I am undone*, and with another look to Christ,& cry out, *There is hope in Israel concerning me*, that is, with one eye they might look to themselves,& *blush*,and with another eye they might look to Christ,and *hope*,that with one eye they might look to themselves & *weep*, & with another eye they might look to Christ and *rejoyce*.O Christian will thoujudge alway of thy self by what thou art in Christ, and not by what thou art in thy self;yea,I would say this to thee by the way,when thou meetest with tentations that put thee to dispute thy interest , do but send them to Christ to get an answer,and say,O precious Christ answer this tentation, for this is Christs way with the soul,the law must bring usback toChrist, and Christ must send us back to the law & deliver us over to it,not to the condemning power of it as before,but the directing and guiding power of it as a rule of holiness;so that a Christians whole life must be a sweet & constant travelling between Christ and the Law;when thou hast broken the Law,flie unto Christ to

to take away the guilt,and when thou hast closed with Christ , come runring out again in his strength to perform the Law.

The fourth mistake is,that Christians judge of their estate by the measure of their graces,more nor by the sincerity of them,someChristians if they find not love in such a degree, and if they find not repentance in such a degree, immediatly they begin and raze the foundations, and do call their enjoyments delusions, and their faith presumption, and their mortification hypocrisie; but I must say this to thee,we should not only weigh our graces in the ballance, but try them also by the touch-stone,for the smalest piece of gold is gold, and the least degree of faith;is alike precious faith,with what the Apostles themselves had.

The fifth ground of mistake amongChristians is this, that they compare themselves more unto the Saints, then they judge of themselves by the Word. O faith one,if I were like *David*,I would believe,but I am not like *David*,nor *Job*,nor *Hezekiah*:and therefore there is none of theSaints to which I should go,& if I should call, there is none to answer,and why then should I believe?I wold only say to thee whose objection that is,it is even *Davids* objection, *Ps.*22.5,6. *Our fathers trusted in thee*; O they were excellent men, but what man am I? *A worm and not a man*,&yet he was put from that objection:and I would say this,are ye below him, in what?I hope ye are not below *David* in necessity ; Now though ye be below him in grace,if ye be not below him in necessity,ye have so much the more right to believe;for as we said before,necessity giveth you a right,&the more necessity,the greater right to belive.

The sixth ground is,that Christians judge of their estate by Christs part of the Covenant, & not by their own,rather examining themselves by whatChrist hath promised to do for them,then by what is left to them to do,which thing if it were heeded,would put a close to many of our mistakes,and disputings. G 4 Ha-

Having now laid out some mistakes upon either hand,the next we would do is,to propose some considerations to press you to guard against these mistakes,especially the first.

And the first consideration is,that mistakes about ones interest in Christ,and assurance,is a most universal and popular evil.it is not one of a City,nor two of a family, but many are mistaken in their Interest In Christ;that word,*Pro.*30.12. *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes , and yet is not cleansed from their iniquity*,It is not one or two that are under this mistake,but it is a generation,and I suppose there are many of us,that are of this tribe and generation,*Mat.* 7.22.He saith,*many in that day shall say unto me Lord, Lord, and have we not propheſied,and yet he shall say unto them,I know you not*:since it is so universal a mistake, I intreat you , be much in the search of your selves, search your own selves;certainly I think,if there were but within this Church one that were under this mistake,it should put us all to this,*Master is it I, Master is it I?* but how much more since there is a generation of mistakers,should it not be our exercise every day to cry out,*is it I?*

The second consideration is, that as it is a most universal,so also it is a most irrecoverable mistake.if ye mistake about this,your being in Christ, there is no making up of that mistake,if once ye pass the borders of Time with this lie in your right hand,I am inChrist, there is no hope of recovery, eternity will cut off all access to make up mistake:I intreat you go not down to your grave with this , I am in Christ, when yet Christ may say,I know you not:I believe it,if ye could have a testimonial subscribed by the hands of all the most eminent and tender Christians that ye have known, that ye are indeed a Saint,and if all the Ministers that ever you spoke to,should praise you in the gate,and declare you to be a son and daughter of *Abraham*

braham;yet when you shall bring up your testimonial to heaven,and the Father shal read it,and sha'ask you where is my Sons Name,if it be not there,it will certainly be rejected,and cast over the bar.

Thirdly,It is a soul-destroying delusion, this mistake about ones interest in Christ,is the very ruine of their immortal soul,according to that word, *Is.*44.20. *A deceived heart hath led them aside* , and what is the fruit of it,*so that he cannot deliver his soul*,and by consequence it may be said, that they destroy their soul; I believe it,there be many that go to hell in a chariot of delusion;we know some Christ guideth to heaven by the gates of hell,and letteth them not see life, till they be in sight of hell; but it is true also,there are others whom the devil guideth to hel by the very borders of heaven ; he maketh them believe they are dwelling in the gates of heaven all their days,and yet at last they are thrust down to these habitations that are prepared for the devil and his angels.

Fourthly,if once a person be mistaken about their interest in Christ, they will have these three notable disadvantages attending upon them; 1. As long as he is under this mistake, he is without all reach of profiting by the Ordinances,for when he heareth preaching , he will apply promises when he should apply threatnings;& upon the other hand,apply threatnings when he should apply promises , and so that which should be his medicine,becometh poison to him.2.As long as he is under this mistake, it maketh him that he cannot pity nor have compassion upon himself, that though he be the most suitable object of compassion , yet he knows not what it is to weep over his own ruine. 3.Readily all his graces are but delusions, and all his good motions are but flashes ; and all his mortifications but counterfeit, and all his tenderness is but the mother of stupidity ; and therefore guard against mistakes about your interest in Christ. I in-

treat you. Fifthly consider, that mistakes about ones interest, is a most abiding and constant mistake in this, believe it, if once we mistake, it is one to a hundred if ever we come right again: this is clear, *Jer.* 8. 5. *They hold fast deceit, they keep it with both their hands*, And *Is.* 44. 20. *There is a lie in their right hand*, that is, they hold the lie, and they keep it with all their power; I say if once one be mistaken concerning their interest in Christ, it is hard to put them from it, yea, delusion it is such an abiding thing, that we find Christ speaketh of it, as if it would wait upon one before the judgement seat of Christ, and as if some would never quite their hope of heaven, till Christ pronounce that word, *Depart from me, I know you not*, delusion may carry us over the borders of Time, and lead us to Eternity.

Sixtly, Their is much counterfeit Religion that is in those days, there is a painted faith, there is a painted love, there is a painted mortification, and there is a painted tenderness; some they love shadows and pictures, and yet they do not love the very shadow of Christ, and are there not many who think they are imbracing Christ, and yet are imbracing a delusion and fancy.

That which thirdly we would speak to from the point is, to give you some evidences by which ye may know if the assurance ye have of your being in Christ be right or no; believe it, there are many that draw that conclusion, *I am in Christ*, which the devil & their own deceitful heart hath drawn, & Christ never gave consent to it. And I shall propose these seven or eight evidences of real assurance, by which ye may discern,

First, a real assurance is a purifying and sanctifying assurance, that is clear, 1 *Joh* 3. 3. *Every man that hath this hope in him*, that is, perswaded of this that he shall come to heaven, *He will purifie himself as he is pure*: And 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit.* O! When a Christian getteth Christ in his arms, he cannot but cry forth, *what have I to do any more with idols?* When he hath once gotten Christ in his arms, he will answer every tentation that he meeteth with this, *I am not mine own, I am bought with a price*, I cannot dispose of my self; and if your assurance of going to heaven be not a purifying assurance, be perswaded of it, it is but the devils *pillow sewed under your arm holes.* Is it possible a person can be assured of heaven, and not study holiness, can such a delusion as this overtake you.

Secondly, A real assurance putteth the Christian to a pressing and earnest pursuit after communion & fellowship with God; is it possible for one to be assured, and not to be saying, *he is sick of love*, this is clear, *Song* 2. 16, 17. *My beloved is mine, and I am his*, and immediatly followeth, *Turn thee, O my beloved, and be like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether*: And it is clear, *Song* 7. 10, 11. *I am my beloveds, and his desire is towards me*, and what followeth upon that, She cometh and inviteth Christ; *O come down with me to the fields, let us lodge in the villages.* O when gave ye Christ such an invitation as this, O precious Christ, let us *lodge in the villages, and go down to the secret places of the field*, and *Psal.* 63. 1. *My God*, there is his assurance; and immediatly followeth upon that, *Early will I seek thee, my soul thirsteth after thee as a dry parched land where no water is.* There is a pressing desire after communion. But I would ask you. Are there not many here who have the hope of heaven (to their apprehension) and yet the desire of communion with Christ, was never with them: I desire to say to thee, (be who thou will) *Be not deceived, God is not mocked, that which thou soweſt, thou shalt also reap.* I think there are some of us, we would let

Christ

Christ live in heaven many days without giving him one visite, if he would let us alone: But O, if we were within sight of our interest in Christ, how often wold this be our complaint, when he were absent; *They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him*; or my idol hath carried me away from him, and I know not where to find him

Thirdly, Assurance of our being in Christ, will put us to the exercise of praise: believe it, I think this is one of the most searching evidence of assurances; there are some Christians they will be convinced for the neglect of the duty of prayer, but for the neglect of the duty of praise, they never have one conviction; and I tell you the reason of it prayer is a selfish grace (so to speak) but praise it is a denying grace, prayer seeketh, but praise giveth, *Exod.* 15.2. *He is my God, I will prepare him an habitation, & he is my fathers God, I will exalt him. Ps.* 118.28. *He is my God I will praise him, he is my God, I will exalt him.* what needed *David* these repetitions, might not one serve? No saith he, I would even spend my days in this, *My God, my God*; there is much of heaven in that word, *My God*, and love committeth many sweet *tautologies*: Now I say to thee, was thou ever put to the heart exercise of praise, by this assurance that thou hast, this is an evidence indeed, but alace, many of us cannot say it.

Fourthly, A person that liveth within sight of his interest, Christ is matchless unto him as is clear, *Song* 2.3 *I sat down into his shadow*, there is faith and assurance of it, and what accompanieth that, *As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons*; Christ hath not a match, saith the Spouse, in his sweetness, his power, his beauty and his usefulness is above all.

Fifthly, Real assurance is a humbling thing, the assurance of a Christian maketh him to sit low in the dust Was not *Jacob* low in his own eyes, when he cryed out,

I am less then the least of all thy mercies,; What? was not *David* low in his own eyes, when he spake that word, *What am I, & what is my fathers house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?* & was not *Paul* a low man in his own eyes, *Eph.* 3:8, 16. *I am less then the least of all thy Saints*, and when he cryed out, *I am the chief of sinners*. The assurance that is real, it will make a Christian to sit down in the dust & cry out, *wo is me, I am a man of polluted lips.*

Sixthly, Real assurance will putt o him to take much pleasure and delight in the going about of duries; that word, *Psal.* 40.8. *My God*, saith he, that is his assurance, and presently he subjoyneth, *I delight to do thy will, O Lord*, this he speaketh of himself, as himself, and likewise as a type of Christ, *Psal.* 119. 115. *Depart from me evil doers, I will keep the commandments of my God*; I believe the love of Christ, when it is much in exercise, it will constrain us to our duty, and therefore this proud transporting assurance in these days, that setteth men above all Duties and Ordinances, and maketh them count Gospel, as we las the Law, *but beggarly rudiments*, and cry out to their neighbours, *Stand aback, for I am holier then thou*; must needs be a delusion.

Lastly, There are these three properties of a real assurance, it is a begotten assurance, it is a living assurance, and it is a constraining assurance.

The first two properties of it are set down in that, 1 *Pet.* 1.2. *He hath begotten us to a lively hope*; who begat that assurance in thee? I suppose some have assurance, and it was begotten without travel; but if Christ be not the father of thy assurance, it will evanish and pass away. And, secondly, it must be a living assurance, some hearts are dead as a stone, and yet they say, they have the hope of heaven. And, thirdly, it must be a constraining assurance, it will put the Christian to do what he commands, yea, if it were the most pleasant *Isaac* that we have, if he commandeth us to sacri-

fice it, we would put a knife to the throat of it, and be willing to offer it up

Now after all these evidences, I desire to have a report from you concerning your estate; what think ye of your selves, are ye in Christ, or no? I suppose if Christ should come here to day, and put us all to the door but these that are in Christ, we would have a thin assembly; I confess, I wonder, that that word doth not make us to walk with sadness, *Many are called, but few are chosen*; Now I ask this question at you all, as in the sight of God, as ye will one day answer unto him that will be your judge; what think ye of your selves? Is there none here that can give a present positive answer to this, *Are ye in Christ*, I suppose this, if I were to go round them that are here, and ask, are ye in Christ, *are ye* and *ye in* Christ, O I doubt much if there should be many negative answers within the doors, we have so strong a faith some of us, that since we were born, we never doubted of it; But I think (without commending doubting) I may say, the faith that thou never doubted of, is too like a delusion, and the faith that thou never took pains to keep, and yet it keeped it self, that is too like a delusion, the faith that never knew what it was to put thee to real seeking of Christ, is too like a delusion. But let me close with this, be your estate what it will, search and come away; I think that is one of the most Gospel invitations that is in all the Scripture, *Lament.* 3. 34. *Let us search and try our ways, and turn again unto the Lord*; when thou hast searched, come away, for I tell thee this; there will be nothing that will commend thee to Christ so much as necessity, and I hope there is none of you but ye have enough of this, and know it, if ye will not come to Christ, he will compel you to come, but it shall not be for your advantage to stay away, till ye be compelled. O persons that are out of Christ, *Come away.* O pre-

persons that are in Christ, *Come away*; we must preach that word, *come away*, unto you, as long as you are here, till ye come and be *fixed as a pillar in the house of God*, and go no more out. O study to be near him! O Christian, didst thou ever think upon this, and say with thy self, O when shall I have immediate imbraces of blessed Christ, when shal there be nothing between my heart and Him? till then, we never get Christ near enough, there is alway something between him and us, till we be above the clouds: O these immediate soul-infoldings and imbracings of Christ: Are ye never sending a messenger to heaven, desiring a pass to go away, that ye may enjoy them, and are ye not longing for the day when the waters of *Jordan* shall divide themselves, and the ransomed of the Lord shall pass thorow; Now let us *sing praises to our King, sing praises, for he hath gone up with a shout, and shal come again, sing praises to our King, sing praises.*

SERMON IX.

2 Cor. 13. 5. *Examine your selves whether ye be in the Faith? prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates.*

I Think ere long, there are many that passeth under the notion of professors, that the veriest atheist when he beholdeth their walk, may cry out, *Art thou also become like unto one of us*; Are there not many here that are in a golden dream, & in a fools paradice, *that dream they eat, and behold when they awake, they shall be hungry*; therefore I think it is incumbent upon us, to search and examine our state and condition; prophanity hath slain its thousands, but delusion & presumption hath their ten thousands. It was an ancient complaint of Christ, *Luk.* 12. 57. *And why even of your selves judge ye not what is right*: I am perswaded of this, there are many decrees of peace past upon earth, that are ne-

never ratified in heaven,there are many that cry out, *The bitterness of death is past*, whom yet God by the sword of his justice shall hew in pieces before our eyes. We told you at the last occasion, that we spake upon these words,there were six things we intended to speak from them;of the first three we have spoken.

That which we intend to speak to at this time, is, That there is much soul advantage and spiritual gain, that doth redound to theChristian bythe distinct perswasion of his interest inChrist,this we gathered from *Pauls* doubling the command of searching and trying themselves,as if he had said,it is a business that will be so much for your advantage, that it is incumbent for you to search and try diligently: And for further clearing of the point,I shall only give these three places,*Rev.*2.17.*I will give unto them a white stone,and in the stone a new name written,that no man knoweth, but he that hath received it*:By *the new name;and the white stone*,is understood assurance,and the intimation of it is to the soul:This indeed is such a mercy,that I defy any to make language of it,no man knoweth it,much less can he express it; but he that is the possessor of it,& that place,Isa.62.2,3. *I will give unto them a new name,which the mouth of the Lord will name.* O what a name must that be, which the mouth of the Lord will name?I think what he giveth must be one of the noblest names that ever was given, all the stiles and titles under heaven cannot equal it. And thirdly,we see *David*, in the 18. *Psalm*, found much sweetness and advantage in this, when nine times he hath that word, *My strength,my rock, my fortress and deliverer,my strength and my buckler,the horn of my salvation,and my high tour, O David*, what needeth all these *Mys, David*, would answer us; O! he is so sweet in himself,but O! much sweeter to me,when I put to that possessive note, *My*.

Now to speak more particularly to these advantages of

of assurance, The first is,that a person that is assured of his interest in Christ,he is much in desiring communion withChrist.*Tell me,O thou whom my soul loveth*; (there is his assurance) *where thou feedest, and where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon*, there is desire of communion, and *Song* 7.10,11.*My beloved is mine,& his desire is towards me*,there is her assurance,and immediatly followeth,*Come my beloved,let us go forth into the fields,let us lodge in the villages*,there her desiring of communion,*Song* 2.16,17. *My beloved is mine,and I am his*,and what followeth upon that, *He feedeth among the lillies, until the day break and the shadows flee away,Turn my beloved,and be as a roe,or a wild hart upon the mountains of Bether*, that is is in short,let me have sweet correspondency and fellowship with thee, till the day of eternity shall come. I think the desires of an assured Christian, they are like the grave, they cry continually *Give, give*, and they never say *it is enough*;what is the reason ye seek so little after fellowship with Christ,it is even this,ye are not perswaded of your interest in him; believe it, if once ye had attained to this blessed length, as to cry out, *Christ is mine*, it would be a hell upon earth for you to live at such a distance with him as you do for the most part; O but assurance maketh absence fromChrist an unsupportable burden, *Ps* 22.1. *My God,my God*,there is assurance,& immediatly followeth this complaint, *why hidest thou thy self from me*,*Song* 3.1,2,3.that word,*Him whom my soul loveth*,made her to weep so much under absence from Christ,& *Jo.*20.13.when the Angels ask the question at *Mary,Woman why weepest thou?* I think she thought it a needless question, and she tells the cause of it,*They have taken away my Lord*,I think her heart was at her mouth, when she pronounced these two words,*My Lord*, she spake them with a great deal of emphasis and force, could ye resent absence with Christ so little,if ye were assured he were yours.I confess,

fess, it is no wonder when persons lose that which is not their own, that they weep not much for the loss of it:but oh! to lose that which is our own, it maketh it a cross and a burden to us.

Secondly , It maketh the soul to have a high and matchless esteem of precious Christ,*Song* 5.10.*My beloved is white and ruddy,the chief among ten thousand*; O saith the Spouse,I never saw his like, and I shall never see his like again;there is much in that *My*; interest maketh her look upon Christ with another eye nor she would have done , strangers look upon him but as a *tree planted on the sand*,1Pet.2.7.*To you that believe Christ is precious*,not every one;And *Song* 2.2. *I sat down under his shadow with great delight*, the reason is interest in the words going before, *As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons*; yea assurance will make every thing in Christ exceeding pleasant to the soul,as is clear, *Song* 5. 16. *My beloved is altogether lovely*,or *he is all desires*. I tell you what assurance will do, it will make Christs person pleasant & precious to the soul,it will makeChrists Natures pleasant to the soul,it will make Christs Offices pleasant to the soul,and it will make Christs promises pleasant to the soul,it will make threatnings pleasant to the soul, it will make the smell of Christs Garments pleasant to the soul, and it will make the kisses of his mouth pleasant to the soul : O saith the assured Christian,there is nothing of Christ but it is most pleasant, and is all desires ; His threatnings are pleasant, they are the wounds of a friend , and His kisses are pleasant, they are better then wine , His Name it is pleasant,it is as precious oyntment poured forth,His smillings are most delightsome , *whose countenance is as Lebanon,excellent as the cedars*:O to imbrace a married Christ,how pleasant is it to the soul; What maketh you to have so low thoughts of Christ ?even this, the want of assurance that He is your Husband.

Thirdly,Assurance wil make theChristian patiently to submit to every cross and sad dispensation he meeteth with:this is clear,*Heb.* 10.34 *They took with joy the spoiling of their goods*, and what made them do so, *They hoped for a better inheritance , and a more enduring substance*:I tell you,assurance, it will answer all crosses with this, *Christ is mine*, when they are afflicted;assurance will list up its face and cry out,*Christ is mine*,and when they are reproached, they will comfort themselves with this,*Christ is mine,I can put on the Lord Jesus.*

Fourthly,Assurance will keep you from Apostacy, and defection from Christ, 2*Pet.*1.10.*Make your calling and election sure,and if ye do this*(saith he)*ye shall never fall*, *Heb.* 3.11,12. It is there set down as a fruit of the evil heart of *misbelief*, it maketh us *depart from the living God*,but on the contrary,assurance knitteth the soul to Christ by a threefold cord which is not easily broken. Believe it, the assured Christian can cry out with much confidence of faith,*My Mountain standeth strong,I shall never be moved*, the assured Christian can cry out with much chearfulness:*InGod will I praise his word,in God have I put my trust,I will not be afraid what flesh can do unto me*;yea, he can sweetly sing in the very mouth of danger,*The Lord is my light and my salvation,whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life,of whom shall I be afraid*, Psal.27. 1.

Fifthly, assurance keepeth all the graces of the spirit green and flourishing , it is as a refreshing dew upon our branches which maketh every grace sweetly to blosom in its season , 1. It stireth up the exercise of love, O how vigorous are the actings of love, when a christian can cry out,*My beloved is mine and I am his*, Song1.13. *My beloved*,there is her assurance, *He is a bundle of myrrhe,and shal lie alnight between my breasts*, that is as long as time shall last,I shall never haveChrist out of my heart,there is love,1 *Joh.*4.19.*We loved him, because he loved us first*; our hearts are naturally cold, but love kindleth love,the sense of his love to us,putteth

teth our hearts into a heavenly flame towards him again. 2. Assurance keeps up the exercise of prayer, it is the assured Christian that can pray best, & to best advantage and in these three things especially is prayer helped by assurance; 1. It helpeth in the point of *boldness*, O but the assured Christian can go boldly to the throne of grace, crying, *Abba father, and my Lord, and my God.* 2. It helpeth our diligence in prayer, *Ps.* 63. 1. *O my God*, there is assurance, *early will I seek thee*, there is his diligence as the fruit thereof. 3. It helpeth the *fervency* of prayer, as in that same place, *My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee*, there is his fervency as another fruit of his assurance. 4. Assurance keepeth in exercise and life, the grace of mortification, as is clear, by comparing 2 *Cor.* 4. verse last, with 2 *Cor.* 5. 1. *We look not after the things that are seen, O Paul*, what aileth you, may ye not take a look of the world, O saith *Paul*, and would you know the ground of it, *we know if this house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*, my house and my treasure is in heaven, I must have my heart there, and my eyes also; would you know what would stay your pursuit after the world, study to have the assurance of your interest in Christ continually with you. And, 5. It keepeth in exercise the grace of humility: there is nothing will keep Christians so humble as assurance, *Gal.* 2. 20. *I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me*, *Eph.* 3. 8. there he is all in *exalting grace and debasing himself.* It is the misbeliever and discouraged person, that dwelleth neerest pride; believe it, misbelief is big with child of pride and apostacy, these are the two children which that fruitful mother will bring forth. And, 6. It will help the grace of repentance: would ye know what would make the Christian to repent, it is even this, to take Christ in our arms and call him ours, *Zech.* 12. 10. *They shall look unto him*, that is their faith: *and they shal mourn*

mourn, as one mourneth for his only son; I think it is known by experience; the soul never weeps more tenderly under the conviction of sin, then when he hath Christ in his arms, and can say, *He is mine*: O how sweetly do they then complain; there is not a sight of Christ as their own, when they have offended, but it breaks all their heart in pieces, and it is a sword piercing into the bones when they cry out, O what a fool was I to offend such a precious One, in whom I had so much interest? was it not sense of interest that made *Mary* wash the feet of Christ with her tears? Lastly, it will keep in exercise the grace of joy, 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. It is faith which maketh one to *rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of glory*; Would ye know why your graces are withered? Would ye know why all the pleasant plants of God within your soul are decayed? it is this, ye live without sight of your interest in Christ; believe it (if so I may speak) assurance will be a watering to your graces every morning, and refresh them every hour, it being as a channel through which divine influences is conveighed to the increase of grace, and especially of joy.

The sixth advantage that cometh into the Christian by assurance of his interest in Christ, is, That it maketh death exceeding pleasant and comfortable to the soul; What maketh death *the king of terrors*, and what maketh it so unto us? Is it not this, we go to heaven under a cloud? the assured Christian can take death in his arms and cry out, welcome, *O friend*: the assured Christian when he seeth the chariot, his father sends for him, doth with old *Jacob* rejoyce, and *Psal.* 23. *When I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil*: What brought you that length, *David?* I tel you why, saith he for *God is with me*, verse fourth. I think I need not fear any thing, when I have God in my company; it is the assured Christian that can cry out, *Why should I fear death?* Should I not laugh

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at destruction? I think indeed, the assured Christian needeth not fear death, because death to him is the death of all his lusts, the funeral of all his sorrows: and is not the day of death his coronation-day, his marriage-day, the day of his triumph and his entering into rest, and why then should he fear it? The seventh advantage is, that a Christian being in the state of assurance, can put the highest account upon the smallest mercy that he meets with from God: the assured Christian looketh upon every mercy as a wonder, it is the assured Christian that cryeth out, *I am less then the least of all thy mercies*: there is not a mercy he meeteth with, were it but a drop of cold water, but if he can read this on it, that it came from my husband, and from my father, it will be better to him then the sweetest wine.

Lastly, assurance doth exceedingly help us to chearfulness in obedience, O that is a remarkable connexion that *Paul* hath, *Act.* 27.37. *The Lord whose I am and whom I serve*; that passage also, 2 *Cor.* 5.14. is very observable, *The love of Christ constraineth us, &c.* Why art thou so painful a minister *Paul*? why *knowest thou no man after the flesh*, are not led by carnal interests, nor affections: are so busie and diligent, as all the world counteth thee mad? Why? (saith he) love will not let me rest, if I would be lazie or carnal, or fold my hands to sleep; the love of Christ doth always sound that in my ears, that I was dead, and he hath died for me, that henceforth I should not live unto my self, but unto him that died for me; *Now to him who is the first and the last, who was dead, and is alive for evermore*, We give praise.

F I N I S.

The Spiritual

WARFARE:

OR,

Some SERMONS concerning the nature of Mortification, right exerciſe, and ſpiritual advantages thereof.

Whereunto are added other two Sermons, concerning the myſtery of Contentment.

Being the ſubſtance of ten Sermons, never heretofore printed.

By Mr. *Andrew Gray*, late Miniſter of the Goſpel at *Glaſgow*.

Col. 3. 5. *Mortifie therefore your members*, &c.
Heb. 13. 5. *Let your converſation be without covetouſneſs*, &c.

EDINBURGH,
Printed by the Heir of *Andrew Anderſon*,
Printer to His moſt Sacred Majeſty,
Anno Dom. 1679.

Unto the ſincere Sin-mortifying, and Soul-contentment-ſeeking-Chriſtian.

Dear and loving Friend,

AS the name of the precious Author (who now enjoyeth what he then aſpired to, when he preached theſe following Sermons) will, no doubt, ingratiat them to thee, ſo we are perſwaded, that the divine Subjects here treated upon, when peruſed by thee, whoſe ſerious deſign is to ſtudy and aſpire to what is here preſſed, may not only prove effectual to increaſe thy eſteem of the worthy Author, and thy reſpects to his works; but alſo may highly advance thy ſoul, in thy begun work of mortification of ſin, of dying to the world, and of having the world crucified to thee, that ſo thou may poſſeſs thy ſoul in patience, and ſit down as a contented one, in every ſtate whatſoever, good or bad, letting patience have its perfect work. O! how timely hath the Lord begun with the bleſſed Author, to make him not only acquainted in his own experience as a Scholar, with the hardeſt leſſons of Chriſtianity, but alſo to make him a practical Preacher of the ſpiritual and ſucceſsful method of learning theſe ſo intricat leſſons, and of the advantages of ſtudying, or diſadvantages by the neglect of the ſtudy of them. This we dare ſay, that in peruſing of them, thou ſhalt find him a work-man, who (if he were alive) needed not to be aſhamed, nor affraid of thy cenſure, if thou be a real ſtudent in theſe ſpiritual duties thy ſelf. For theſe two or three things (as eminent perfections in a youth) are remarkable in him. Firſt, that from the ſpeculations and

metaphysical contemplations of Schools, he was immediatly, as it were, rapt, not only into the contemplation, but also soul-experiencing and powerful preaching of the most mysterious points of Christian profession and practice. Secondly, that in the handling of these mysteries, he was free of all youthly vanity and affectation of humane literature, (though he had more then common abilities therein) and having renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftinesse, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; he preached the Word of God, not as the word of man, but as the Word of God, commending himself to every mans conscience in the sight of God. *Thirdly, that he was gifted of God with such plainnesse of speech, and with such an open door of utterance, in delivering these mysteries, that he did out-stripe and over-reach many of those who entered into the Lords Vineyard long before him, the* Lord *verifying that in him which is,* 2 Cor. 3, 17. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. *All which singularities and eminencies of a spiritual Preacher, to have been his speciat mercy from the Lord, to fit him to be eminently a burning and shining light, for the space of about two years in our western climate, is manifest from what of his Works have already come forth to the view of the world, and doth now further appear by these excellent and divine Sermons, upon these two most necessary, but little studied and lesse practised points of Christian Doctrine,* viz, Mortification of lusts, *and* Spiritual Contentment, *never heretofore Printed. Wherein the zealous servant of God endeavoureth to awaken this secure generation unto the study of these so excellent and necessary duties; by laying before us the necessity of these duties, and the advantages attending the study of them, and the prejudices and disadvantages accompanying the neglecters of the saids duties: As also, to encourage and strengthen in the way, all*

all such as have begun the spiritual conflict against sin, and are aiming at perfection in the study of spiritual contentment. He not only presseth the duties, but also pointeth out the right means whereby a Christian may be helped to attain at last, victory over his lusts, and to sit down contentedly with Jonah *under the shadow of his Gourd,* Jon. 3. 6. *And be satisfied with* Elijah *to hide himself by the brook* Cherith, *and to drink of the brook, and to have the ravens to feed him there,* 1 King. 17. 3, 4. *And to say with* David *in an universal resignation of himself to the will of God,* 2 Sam. 15. 26. Behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him: *And withall thou shalt find intermixed, soul-reviving and comforting resolutions, of the most pressing soul-exercises accompanying such as seriously set about these so much soul-concerning duties, of sins mortification and spiritual contentment under every lot. That thou may read with that same affection that the holy Author preached, and reap the same blessing which was with much prayer wrestled for by him to his hearers, wherein he was not unheard, is the earnest prayer of his soul to God, who is.*

Thy servant in the Gospel of our dearest Lord and Savior.

A. S.

THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE.

SERMON I.

Rom. 7. 24. *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*

WHen the ſword of the juſtice of God was coming down upon us, then our bleſſed *Lord Jeſus*, in the infinite depth of his unſearchable love and compaſſion to ſelf-deſtroying ſinners, cryed forth with a loud voice, that juſtice might hold the hand: And as that ram ſacrificed for *Iſaac*, ſo was he willingly content to be *caught in a thicket*, and to become a ſpotleſſe and everlaſting ſacrifice for ſinners. He was content to be bruiſed, that ſo we might paſſe free, and his Fathers hand might be turned upon the little ones. But, notwithſtanding *he hath died for our ſins, and riſen for our righteouſneſs*, yet hath he given to all his followers a ſpiritual warfare to accompliſh, ſo that they ſhould be continually taken up in contending *againſt principalities and powers, and ſpiritual wickedneſſes in high places*; or, as the words

rendered by some, we conceive more appositely, *in heavenly things.* And certainly, there is no discharge in this war, neither any interruption while we are on this side of Eternity: We confesse, God might easily have served an Inhibition on all our spiritual enemies, that they should no more oppose themselves against a believer after Justification, but *He* in the depth of his unsearchable wisdom, and, we may say likewise, infinit love towards his own, hath so contrived their way to heaven, that thorow many afflictions and tribulations in our spiritual warfar, we must enter there; It is much indeed for a Christian to die a victor after war, though not a triumpher; that must come after death, and the trophies and rewards of our victory, shall then be fully given to us, when our feet shall stand within the gates of the new *Jerusalem*, and when we shall receive these two glorious and everlasting badges of our victory, *a crown set upon our head*, having this written upon it, *It endureth for ever*. A motto which could never be engraven upon any Crown here below; and *a Palm put in our hands*; and then indeed shall we sing, as those that divide the spoil, when we have led captivity captive, and sitten down upon a Throne which is established for ever. And we conceive, much divine reflection and holy contemplation upon that precious recompence of reward, and that high and unconceivable pitch of dignity unto which believers and overcomers are to be advanced, would make us with much cheerfulness and alacrity undergo this spiritual warfare. And yet all our triumphing is not suspended, till our war be ended; believe me, there is more real joy in the victory and vanquishing of one lust, yea more divine satisfaction, in a serious pursute and contending with them, though with very small succesſe to our apprehension, than in the actuall enjoyment and

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fruition of all thy lusts. Thou may hide sin under thy tongue, and have it pleasant to thy taste, yet at last it shall be as the gall of asps, and the poison of dragons. O! put on so much holy generosity and spiritual ambition, that though Satan should offer unto them all the Kingdoms of the world, that thou may fall down and worship him, thou mayest cry forth in holy zeal and indignation, *Get thee behind me Satan*; O! that deceitfull oratory and malitious guile wherewith he ensnareth immortal souls, and brings them into subjection. O! but the depths of Satan are subtile and great; And he is a man of understanding that can draw them out, and not be ignorant of his devices; and except we be helped by the candle of the Lord that discovereth the inward parts of the belly, to know these mysterious subtilties of him, whose name is *A deceiver*, they will remain still riddles and mysteries to us.

But since we are compassed about *with this body of death*, and *there is a law in our members rebelling against the law of our minde*, We should be much in groaning for the day of our redemption, when the lawfull captive may be delivered, and the prey taken from the mighty; and that blessed decree may come forth, *O prisoners of hope, go forth and shew your selves.* We are afraid that the Christians of this generation, have proclaimed a cessation of armes, and have concluded a treaty of peace with their lusts, and a league not only offensive, but (shall I adde this) even defensive; not only, that we shall offend our lusts, but shall defend them: and if once we have sealed this treaty and agreement with our Idols, what can they require more at our hands? We conceive, we may sadly allude unto that word, that there is not one amongst fourty thousand in *Israel*, with whom there is a spear and shelld seen in contending in this holy

warfare. O! can such a delusion as this overtake you, that ye can be an overcomer without fighting; is your strength greater then those that have gone before you, that you think you can accomplish this war in one day, and pursue your enemies till ye overtake and consume them? O! when shall that day be, when we shall be groaning forth dayly this mournfull ditty, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death.*

In the words we conceive first, there is a sweet and pleasant emphasis in that word (*me*) speaking so much, that if infinite power and grace were capable of any limitation, and there could be any bounds fixed to it, *Paul* did conceive he was the bounds and limits of infinite power and grace; if there were an impossibility for grace to save any sinner, it should be impossible for grace to have saved him who was *the chiefest of sinners, and lesse then the least of all Saints.* And if each Christian did look upon himself as the greatest debter to the Justice of God, his debt to the infinite grace of God should appear more singular.

Secondly, we may perceive, that a Christians happinesse, doth consist in a sweet exchange of dominion and governments: Once sin doth *reign in his mortal body*, and he is under the dominion of his lusts, but then grace doth step in, and exauctorats and dethrones the former King, and doth reign in the temple of our heart. This is clear, *Rom.* 5. last, and that is a remarkable word which is there, *that grace may reign*, the word in the original doth signifie so much, *that grace may play the King, βασιλευσῃ*, and this fulnesse of graces dominion, is that, the Apostle would be at here. And certainly, there is no repentance of this exchange of Masters: There is much noise and rumour of complaints amongst people in these dayes of the exchange of governments, from one

one species of government to another, we shall leave these debates unto men who desire to exercise their spirits about them: but sure we are of this, that those who are given up to this change, shall have it passe as most legitimat and lawfull, by the divine approbation, both of angels, and of the souls of just men now made perfect.

Thirdly, the way that *Paul* taketh here to propose his complaint under the strong prevalency of the body of death, by way of question *who shall deliver me?* doth not import any hesitation about his perswasion of certainty, that he at last should sing a song of triumph over his lusts; but only that it would be among the richest and the most singular monuments and trophies of the victorie of *Christ*, to save him. *Paul* did (no doubt) conceive that amongst all the royall monuments of *Christs* conquest, that should be, as it were, hanged about the walls of that higher and glorious palace, *Paul* should be put in the highest place, as having least merit to bring him there, (if there could be any merit at all) and most love and grace.

Now to come more particularly to the words, after *Paul* hath most divinely, set forth that woful opposition and contradiction, that was betwixt the unrenewed part and the renewed, and what strong dominion sin had over him, he doth in these words breath out a sweet desire to be delivered, not only from his actual corruption, but from his original guilt, which here he calleth *the body of this death*, not only because corruption is a thing which may be easily discerned and known to us, it being (so to speak) a thing which may fall under the object of our sight, being no spirit but a body; but also because of these great multitudes of corruptions that flow from that root original sin, it having so many different members a

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parts which are so diversified and so compleat, that they may make up a body, which body if it be intertained, shall certainly bring and occasion death. So when he is under the strong convictions of his guilt, and hath had a compleat discovery of himself, you may see his exercise holden forth in these words, *O wretched man*, the word in the original ταλαίπωρος, signifieth one that is wearied with troublesome and continual combats, with little apparent successe, and this doth certainly import that he was a man, much and continually taken up in wrestling against his corruptions, and endeavouring to bring them unto subjection unto the obedience of *Christ Jesus*.

And ye may see likewayes in these words, the way that *Paul* took to overcome his lusts, he was much in the exercise of prayer; for the words that we have read are indeed a short and pathetick prayer. I conceive that word which is recorded in Isa. 38. 14. *O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me*, is a sweet paraphrase upon these words.

Fourthly, You may see his great and principal [illegible]t to have been, *deliverance from this body of death:* [illegible]is captive exile was hasting to be delivered, and [illegible]oking out at the windowes of his Prison-house, waiting till the Jaylor should come and open the doors, and take his chains and fetters from off his feet: We confesse these shall not be fully taken off, till we shall be passing thorow the door of our everlasting rest, and then that woful and sad complaint shall take his everlasting adiew and farewell; for if we may speak so, the burial place of sin is before the door of our eternal rest, it then ceaseth to be, when we begin more eminently to have a beeing; But may we not be ashamed and blush, that we are not more [illegible]uttering those inexpressible sighs and groans of the [illegible]t, under the conviction of our sinfulnesse, since this

this holy man, who had, no doubt, attained unto a great length in mortification, who had *plucked out many right eyes*, and *cut off many right hands*, and oftimes returned victor after war, was so much in groaning under his corruption. O! but we have inverted strangely the way to heaven! I conceive practical Antinomianisme is an Epidemick error in these dayes: Many think that it is below a regenerat man to mourn, and to sit down and lament over the body of death; we know not what it is *to make our bed to swim with tears*, and to be *bedewing the way to Zion, when our faces are thither ward*; ye conceive that it is a lesson to be practised, and learned by those in a lower classe, and those who are learning (so to speak) the Rudiments of Christianity, and not to be exercised by those, who are now advanced unto the high classe of Christianity, that being, (as it were in our apprehension) a degrading of your selves from that pitch of perfection unto which in your imagination you have attained: but, believe me, it is a work not below the eldest Christian, nor above the youngest beli[illegible]; and the more one be old in reality in Religion, this work wil alwayes be new in their practice. I shall only give you that divine counsel of a holy man, who desired Christians to set about the mortification of their lusts, as though they had never been taken up in that duty before; each day to set about to mortifie, not as a proficient, but as a beginner, who hath never made any progresse in that blessed work.

Now in speaking upon *Pauls* exercise, which is here holden forth, that he was continually exercised in wrestling against those corruptions, and that body of death that was in him; we need not stand long to prove that it is the duty of a Christian to be so exercised and taken up; there is somewhat of that implyed in that word, *Act.* 24. 16. And it is more

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clearly preſſed, *Col.* 3. 5. *Eph.* 6. 13. and, 1 *Cor.* 5.7. And, no doubt, if a Chriſtian did reflect more upon the nature of ſin, and conſider that by it, difformity with God is increaſed, and precious conformity with him loſt; and, did we take up ſin in its woſull effects, that it worketh death, and involveth us under the curſe of *a living God*, we would be more conſtant in this ſpiritual warfare. O! but Chriſtians thorow want of the apprehenſion of theſe, are much diſenabled to *ſtand faſt to that liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made them free, and oft-times entangled themſelves again with the yoke of bondage*: So that I conceive if *God* were coming to give a name to the Chriſtians of this generation, he might call us, *Iſſachar*, becauſe we do now croutch down under two burdens, and are become ſervants unto tribute; and even thoſe that are more refined and tender in their walk in thoſe dayes, he might call them *Reuben*, becauſe they are unſtable as water, which marreth their excellency.

But that which firſt we ſhall ſpeak to is, how the wreſtlings of a natural man againſt the body of death, and thoſe corruptions that are within him, may be diſtinguiſhed from the wreſtlings of one that is really godly.

And firſt we conceive, that it is without debate and controverſie, that a man altogether unregenerate, by natures light may be put on to mortifie (if ſo we may ſpeak) and contradict thoſe ſins, which are moſt ſenſual and groſſe; natures light including an antipathy and deteſtation of thoſe things within it ſelf; though we confeſſe, thorow the depravement of our nature, thoſe ſins, which fall under the ſphere of natures mortification, are now abridged unto a ſmall [illegible], it being not now refined and clear, as it was when man was in the eſtate of innocence.

Secondly, another ſort may, from ſome common qualification,

qualification, oppoſe ſome ſins, as thoſe that are of more heroick and refined ſpirits, will have deteſtation againſt covetouſneſſe and other ſins of that nature, and ſo in ſome ſenſe may endeavour the mortification of theſe things.

Thirdly, the ſame may a natural man do by ſuch a conviction of the holy Ghoſt, as is but a common work of the ſpirit, he may be put on to mortifie theſe ſins that are more viſible, and ſomewhat groſſe in their nature, as is clear from the practice of thoſe who cleanſe the outſide of the platter, and ſtudies to have an outward conformity unto the law of God, notwithſtanding of that inward and ſecret antipathy, againſt the ſtrictneſſe of his law; yea more, a natural man who hath ſome predominant evil, may endeavour and will atempt to wreſtle againſt that ſin, which is in a direct line of oppoſition againſt it; as one that is given to that vice of covetouſneſſe, will ſtudy to mortifie that vice of prodigality, thoſe being two oppoſit vices. Now from all theſe we may conclude, that upon every oppoſition which we uſe againſt our corruptions: it is not ſafe to infer, that we are really ingaged in this ſpiritual warfare; it being, we think another thing then the moſt part of us do imagine it to be: And we confeſſe, it is a difficulty even to attain that length of endeavour in mortification, which the natural man by theſe things which we have ſpoken may attain to. But for the difference betwixt their debates, the firſt is this; that a natural and unregenerat man, doth mainly wreſtle againſt theſe ſins, that are outward and more groſſe, and not ſo much againſt thoſe ſins that are inward, and falls not under the eye of man: we do not deny but a natural man may wreſtle againſt vain thoughts, and have ſome ſmall oppoſition, against the ſtirring of corruption within his own boſom

but we conceive, that there are these two secret sins which a natural man is not at all taken up in wrestling against, at least very little, *viz.* his *original corruption*, and his *unbelief*; whereas one that is really godly, is much taken up in hearing down these. *Paul* is here taken up in wrestling against his original sin; and *David*, Ps. 51. 5. compared with *ver.* 2. and 7. is likewise taken up in wrestling against it; and that good man that is recorded in the Gospel, who cryed forth, *Lord I believe, help my unbelief*, was much taken up in wrestling against his unbelief; and, *David*, Ps. 77. from the beginning to the 10. verse and forward: and certainly, one that never was taken up in wrestling against these two (at least in some small measure and degree) he may hesitate much whether or not he was ever seriously engaged in this holy warfare. O! but if many that passe under the notion of Professors were posed, when they did enter into the lists with original corruption, there are many who without breach of truth might say, they never knew what it was to contend against it: And this certainly speaks forth much of our ignorance of original guilt; And believe me, there is more difformity unto the Image of God in original sin, then in a thousand actual outbreakings: And it is but in vain for a Christian to attempt the mortification and cutting off of branches, till once he study to pluck up the root, which doth bear *wormwood and gall.*

A second difference is this, a natural man wrestleth against his corruptions, rather because they bring him under the stroak of the justice of God, than because they are contrary to the holinesse of God: Hence is it that the most part of a natural mans wrestling is, when he is under affliction; somewhat which is pointed out, *Ps.* 78. 34, 35. Now this difference is clear in *Joseph* and *Paul*, who made the holinesse

holinesse of God, the great topicks and common place whence they did produce all their arguments for contradicting sin, as *Paul* in this Chapter, and *Joseph* in that precious sentence, *Shall I do this, and sin against God?* but *Cain*, who was a man cut off from the right hand of the Lord, had another principle of contradicting and wrestling against his lusts, *My punishment is greater then I can bear*, Gen. 4. 13. And hence is it that a natural man doth never oppose sin, as it is a cause to interrupt fellowship and communion with God, or from that divine principle of Christs love constraining him: O! but the principle of a natural man wrestling against corruption, be selfish and low! and if there were not a hell, and a place of torment, natural men would take a latitude to themselves not to mortifie sin. But sure it argueth a divine and heroick spirit, and plausable to them, *who have Christ in them their hope of glory*, that though there were neither any regard or remuneration of their obedience, neither any punishment of their disobedience, yet simple desire to please God, and not to profane his holinesse which he loveth, doth tye them to obedience. I may confidently say, that these who never knew what it was to have that threefold cord, and that precious triple chain, binding them to obedience, and inducing them to mortifie their lusts, to wit, *the holinesse of God, the fear to interrupt communion and fellowship with him*, and *the love of Christ*, they may question whether or not ever they were seriously engaged in this holy warfare: But withall we do not deny, but the fear of punishment is likewise a most divine principle of mortification, in its own place; but except there be somewhat higher, it is not to build upon.

The third difference is this, that a natural man studieth more to restrain sin, then to mortifie it; for

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he is a man that resteth satisfied with the restraint of the actings of sin, though there be no mortification of that vicious inclination which is in the man: this is clear in *Haman* Esth. 3. 5. in *Saul*, 1 Sam. 24. 16, 17. and following verses compared with 1 *Sam.* 26. 2. and in the Scribes and Pharisees, *Matth.* 23. 25. But, the mortification that the heart requireth, is of a higher nature, *Gal.* 5. 24. where we are commanded *to crucifie the flesh with the affections and lusts*; not only to restrain the acts but to mortifie the habits: we confesse it is a difficulty to determine the difference betwixt the restraint of sin, and mortifying of sin, and this maketh it the more difficult, that sins which are really mortified, sometimes a Christian may be overtaken to commit, which I conceive seldome or never holds of sins that are more gross, but holds oft-times of sins that are of a lower nature and degree. Yet these things may a little point forth the difference, first, a Christian who hath sin mortified, is filled with much divine joy and satisfaction in the mortifying of it, which we conceive partly doth proceed from this, that a Christian, when he is honoured to mortifie a lust, he ordinarily then receives the intimation of his peace and interest in God, in a more lively and spiritual way. And, secondly, because at that time also he doth receive much precious and sweet communion with God, his soul then is in life; somewhat of this is pointed out to us, *Rom.* 8. 13. and, *Rom.* 7. 24. compared with vers. 25. Thirdly, the difference may be known by this, that when a man hath been much in the exercise of fasting and prayer for the mortifying of such a lust and idol, and hath not attained to this with great facility, there is great appearance that upon the desisting of tentation, and the actings of his spirit to commit such a thing, such a lust is mortified, and not restrained only; there is some-

somewhat of this pointed forth, *Matth.* 17. 20, 21. where it is said, that power of casting out of devils goeth not forth but by fasting and prayer. We conceive the place is principally to be understood concerning the faith of miracles, though by proportion and analogy it may hold of sanctifying faith: O! our lusts in these dayes do rather go out, then are cast out; they rather die to us then we to them. Fourthly, the frame of spirit which we have after mortifying of a lust, may let us see whether it be a real work, or only some restraint for a time; a man that doth attain such a length, as really to mortifie and crucifie any lust, is much taken up in the exercise of praise, *Rom.* 7. 25. 1 *Cor.* 15. 55, 56, 59. he under conviction of his duty to bless the Lord though he is also convinced of an impossibility of blessing him as he ought to be: but we think, when lusts are restrained only, and not mortified, the man is not so much taken up in the exercise of praise. O! what heavenly Elogies and Songs of praise have the Saints penned unto the unsearchable and omnipotent grace of *Christ*, when they have been enabled to overcome and crucifie a lust, *Their souls have been enditing a good matter concerning the praises of the King, their tongue hath been as the pen of a ready writer.* And this may, lastly, point out the difference; Sins that are mortified do not for the most part presently recur so, as to obtain victory over the Christian; we confesse, Sathan, to weaken our confidence, may assault us with tentations to commit that iniquity, that so we may be brought to call in question our real and spiritual victory over it: but if lusts be only restrained, it cannot be long away from obtaining victory; this is clear from *Esth.* 4. 10. compared with the following verses, as likewise from 1 *Sam.* 24. 16, 17. &c. compared with 1 *Sam.* 26. 2.

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The fourth difference; a natural man is not constant in his wreſtling againſt his corruptions, but takes it by fits and ſtarts, either when he is under affliction, or ſome other ſad occurrence that doth befall him, or through ſome ſharp and ſudden conviction of a commonly enlightened conſcience; but he that is really taken up in this ſpiritual warfare, hath a conſtancy in maintaining of it, at leaſt in his endeavours: this is clear from *Act.* 24. 16. and *Col.* 3. 5. and indeed that woſull inconſtancy that we have in this ſpiritual warfare, doth evidence our little real engagment in the work. Are there not many here, who can interrupt the warfare many weeks, and yet not be much under either the diſcovery of their loſſe, or under any impreſſion of ſorrow becauſe of it? Sure, if this were believed, that there may be more loſt in one day, than can be gained in many, we would endeavour to be more conſtant. O! but race is a tender thing, and we ought to keep it *as the pple of our eye.* Alace, there are but too many, who cken their endeavour againſt ſin, and will ly idle any dayes, and yet are ready to think, that when ey pleaſe, they can ſhake themſelves of their luſts at other times; but to theſe we ſhall only ſay this, ware leſt that diſpenſation once meet you, that hen ye ſhall begin to ſhake your ſelves of your luſts d of your bands, your ſtrength ſhall be gone from ou, and then your enemies ſhall lead you captive, d put out your two eyes. O! but ſome times our rruptions get ſuch advantage over us, that we may *y, Video meliora proboque, deteriora ſequor.*

The fifth difference, they go not about this warre from a right principle, which the Chriſtian doth, one wreſtles in their own ſtrength, but the other ing upon the ſtrength of *Jehovah, that everlaſting ngth*, this is poipted at, *Rom.* 8. 13. there is a command,

mand, that a wreſtling Chriſtian ſtudies alwayes to obey: a Chriſtian uſes much that precious divinity of *David*, 1 *Sam.* 17. 45, 46. when they go to war. And alace there are many that are living under the apprehenſion of this warfare, who in the day of their accompts, we fear ſhall be found never really to have entered in the liſts *with principalites and powers and ſpiritual wickedneſſe.* And it is no wonder that many of us be foiled by the hand of our iniquities, we not having ſitten down firſt when we engaged, to conſult, whether we with our ten thouſand, were able to meet him that came againſt us with his twenty thouſand, we engaged without the apprehenſion of difficulty, and ſo no wonder we be overcome without much difficulty. Now examine your ſelves by theſe, whether indeed you be engaged in this ſpiritual warfare.

Now that which, ſecondly, we ſhall ſpeak to, ſhall be, to thoſe advantages that a Chriſtian may have by being continually taken up in the ſpiritual warfare. The firſt advantage is this, it is an excellent way to obtain victory over theſe luſts and Idols, wherewith we are beſet: we conceive it is no wonder that this be the great and general complaint of Chriſtians in theſe dayes, that they are led captive by the hand of their iniquities, and that the voice and noiſe of the ſpoiler is ſo much heard with them, becauſe they are not taken up in a conſtant debating and contending with ſin; there is ſomewhat of this pointed out to us, *Rev.* 3. 5. where though that promiſe be principally underſtood of the reward of an overcomer, when he ſhall be above, that *he ſhall be clothed in white*, yet we think it may include this, that a man that is in the way, and conſtant exerciſe of overcoming, ſhall attain to much divine conformity with God, and much divine difformity with the world: and to

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those who are much discouraged with their little success and apparent victory in this war, notwithstanding of their constancy in debate with their lusts, we shall only speak that for their comfort by way of allusion, which is Dan. 7. 12. *Their dominion shall be taken from them, but their lives be prolonged for a season and time*: the dominion of your lusts shall be taken away, though their lives may be prolonged for your exercise and dependence on him for a short time and season: ye may have tribulation in this spiritual warfare *ten dayes*, but be convinced of this that the day is coming, when ye shall sit down upon a Throne, after ye have overcome, as *Christ* also did sit down, after he had overcome; once ye shall stand and defend the field when all your lusts shall flee as chaff before the wind: albeit oftimes our discouragement speaks that word which *Saul* spake to *David*, 1 Sam. 17. 33. (when we are to wrestle with the devil) *thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth*: yet a Christian ought to answer, *through God I shall do valiantly.*

Secondly, it is the way to attain much divine consolation, as is clear, *Rev.* 2, 17. *To him that overcometh will I give to eat the hidden Manna*, which is (as we conceive) in part, he shall have of the consolations of the holy Ghost, though it be principally understood of *Jesus Christ*. O! what a divine contentment and unspeakable solace of mind doth a Christian attain by intertaining a constant enimity against his lusts. I am perswaded, that that which doth interrupt a Christians peace much, is the interruption of that holy and divine enimity, which we ought to have against sin; believe me, there is more real satisfaction to be found in one dayes serious debate against sin, then in having an eternity of enjoy-

ment of the most flourishing pleasures in the world: *ye may sow in tears* in this warfare, but *ye shall only reap in joy*: the first part may be true of the men of the world, in their pursuits after their pleasures, they do sow in tears; but it was never yet heard nor left upon record, that they did reap in joy; there was alwayes a correspondence betwixt their seed-time, and their harvest; but there is a divine transmutation and disproportion betwixt the seed-time of a Christian and his harvest, unspeakable joy can spring off the root of their most bitter sorrows.

Thirdly, it is an excellent way to maintain the faith of our interest in God, this is clear from *Rev.* 2. 17. where *Christ* giveth this promise to the overcomers, that he will give them *a new name*, which holdeth forth their adoption and interest in him, which no man can know, but he that receiveth it; and certainly, there is nothing that over-clouds a Christians hope so much, nor darkneth his interest, as an intermission in this holy warfare. Yea more particularly he attaineth to the most certain perswasion of his victory over his corruptions: there is somewhat of this pointed out, 2 *Tim.* 7. 8. *I have fought the good fight of faith*, and hence he doth infer, that there is laid *up for him a crown of righteousnesse*, which doth certainly import and include in its bosome, that *Paul* upon his constant endeavour to wrestle against corruption, did attain to much certainty of overcoming. I think it is altogether impossible for a Christian, intermitting this holy warfare, to intertain any divine or assured perswasion, that there is a blessed issue and period unto his warfare. And we think it is from this, that oftimes his own cry out, *who can stand before the children of Anak*, and do conclude to make to the themselves a Captain, and go back unto Egypt: though we think, that if we were constant in this,

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we would be taught, not only to intertain a holy undervaluing of them, but likewayes a divine certainty of overcoming. I think a Christian hath not only that advantage by being constant in this warfare, that he is brought to an assured perswasion that he shall overcome, but likewise doth most sweetly conclude, that the strength of their corruption is gone, therefore they may go up and war with them.

Fourthly, by maintaining this warfare, a Christian gets much experience; by it he attains to much distinct apprehension of the deceitfulnesse of him, who is *the deceiver of the brethren.* We are perswaded, that these who are constant in this warfare, can speak most to those singular subtilties of Sathan, and can most distinctly fathom these deep devices of his; as likewayes, they can most take up the unsearchable deceitfulnesse of their own heart: and there is, no doubt, no small advantage in the taking up of these two, both that we may be provoked unto self-diffidence, as likewayes to have our confidence and hope much reposed upon *Jesus Christ*, who is *the Captain of our salvation*, that we may be constrained in that day when the blast of the terrible one, is as a blast against the wall and when the archer doth shoot at us, and grievously wound us, to go unto him, whose name is *an everlasting strength*, that so by his strength we may be enabled to overcome.

That which thirdly we shall speak to, shall be, what is the reason Christians do obtain so small victory in this spiritual warfare: and in this, we shall not only speak to these morall and culpable causes, why Christians do not obtain much victory, but we shall likewayes speak a little, to these divine and precious ends that God hath in denying victory to his own, who in some small measure are entertaining a constant enimity against their corruption. And as for the

the first, it doth proceed from too much self-conceit & presumptuous opinion of their own strength; I am perswaded, that that which made *Peter* so uncapable to resist the tentations of denying *Christ*, did much proceed from that word which is *Matth.* 26. 33. *Though all men should be offended because of him, yet he would never be offended.* Therefore we think, that the first and most excellent way to obtain victory is, to be dwelling under the apprehensions of our own weakneſſe to overcome, that holy and divine paradox being always made true, that *when we are weak, then are we strong*: and we may enter into the lists with our corruptions, having no confidence in the flesh but desiring in the name of the *God of Israel* to wrestle with the strongest *Goliah* that we meet with. O! but humility is a most sweet and strong armour, wherewith a Christian ought to be clothed, when he goeth to war: he must walk in that holy fear, which may be consistent with faith, and entertain so much faith, and spiritual confidence, as many not altogether cut off holy fear.

There is a second cause, which is, too much intanglement with the pleasures, and affairs of the world: It is impossible for one who is taken up in the continual noise and buz of things here below, to be an overcomer; hence *Paul* presseth, 2 *Tim.* 2. 4. that *no man that warreth ought to intangle himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a souldier*; and that word, 1 *Cor.* 9. 25. *He that striveth for the mastery must be temperate in all things.* O! oft-times through the deceitfulnesse of the world and pleasures thereof, we are led captive by the hand of our iniquities, and do fall before our enemies. I know nothing so suitable and helpful for a Christian to overcome, then to be denyed to these three cardinal and fundamental temp-

tations, by which Sathan ſtandeth to allure us, which are *the luſt of the eye*, *the luſt of the fleſh*, *and the pride of life*; that our eye may not take in, any ſweet or pleaſant repreſentations of the tranſient vanities of the world, neither may our ſenſual appetite be taken with the taſte of theſe bitter and moſt ſoure delights, neither may be ambitious in the enjoyment, and actual poſſeſſion of them.

There is a third cauſe, which is, that we are not taken up in the exerciſe of watchfulneſſe: this is certain that the exerciſe of this grace, hath moſt divine influence, for the overcoming of our corruptions, as is clear from *Matth.* 26. 41. and *Mark.* 14. 38. That ought to be the great Motto of a Chriſtian ſouldier, which ought to be engraven upon his armes, *Watch*: Watchfulneſſe is not only effectual for overcoming in this reſpect, that it doth diſcover unto us our temptations, when they begin to aſſail us, but likewiſe it takes up both the ſubtilty and ſtrength of our temptations, as likewiſe it taketh up the weakneſs and inabillty in the Chriſtian to reſiſt that temptation; and if thoſe three be attained, ſeldom or never is a Chriſtian much foiled by the hand of his iniquities, therefore that which I would ſay to a Chriſtian ſouldier, I would ſay unto all, *Watch.*

There is a fourth cauſe, which is, that we are not much taken up in the exerciſe of ſecret prayer, prayer being indeed that noble and ſpiritual weapon by which Chriſtians do overcome, as is clear from *Matth.* 26. 41. and 2 *Cor.* 12. 7. where *Paul*, when *meſſenger of ſatan was buffeting him*, was conſtrained *to beſeech the Lord thrice*, a practice much unknown by the moſt part of Chriſtians, who know not what it is *to pray without ceaſing*, when they are tempted much without interruption. I think of all the weapons

weapons that almoſt a Chriſtian taketh to reſiſt temptation, this is the moſt effectual; for when *Sathan* ſeeth that a Chriſtian improves the temptation ſo much for his own advantage, as to make it an errand to go to God, then he deſiſts and gives over to contend: I confeſſe a Chriſtian may in ſo far glory in his infirmities, as they give him an occaſion to converſe more frequently with *God*, O! but had we ſpent more of our time in converſing with *God*, when we were alone, we might have attained many ſweet trophies, and fruits of our victory, which now we have only in hope and expectation.

There is a fifth cauſe, which is, that we are not much taken up in the exerciſe of Faith, which is that general peace of armour that *Paul* doth preſcribe unto the Chriſtian, *Eph.* 6. 16. *Above all things, taking the ſhield of faith, whereby ye ſhall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked*: there is that ſweet note of commendation put upon this armour, that there is no temptation a Chriſtian can meet with, but through the exerciſe of Faith, he may be able to overcome it: hence *Paul* ſaith, ye ſhall be able to quench *all* the fiery darts of the *Devil*: This peece of armour is not only defenſive, but we may ſay, in ſome meaſure, it is offenſive likewayes: now Faith helps a Chriſtian to overcome his temptations and corruptions, wherewith he is aſſaulted, not only by laying hold on the infinit ſtrength of him who is *the Captain of Salvation*; but likewayes, Faith is that grace which hath the moſt ſubtile and divine eye in taking up the ſtrength of corruption: O! but a man much in the exerciſe of Faith, is a man that can paſſe a moſt accurat ſentence upon his luſts and Idols wherewith he doth rencounter: there is nothing impoſſible to the be-

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lieving man: and I think, if there be any grace by which a Christian doth ascend most to a divine similitude unto the omnipotency of *God*, it is by the grace of Faith: hereby is the Christians power most intended. O! but Faith will make those that are weak, strong: Therefore we would desire you to be exercising your confidence upon him, who is that *munition of rocks*, that so through him ye may overcome, as likewayes through the word of your testimony.

This lastly may be a cause, that after some small victory over our lusts, we are ordinarily entangled with security, not knowing what it is to make the victory over one lust, a sweet provocation to the overcoming of another. I think (if we may allude unto that word which is, *Psal.* 18. 37.) it ought much to be the practice of a Christian, *to pursue his enemies till he overtake them, and never to return again till they be consumed*, that by the strength of him who *is Jehovah*, we may *run thorow a troup*, and by *our God we may leap over a wall*. O! but constant exercise in this war, never proclaiming a cessation of armes, would make a speedy riddance of all our adversaries; *he* then *should teach our hands to warre*, and *by our armes a bow of steel might be broken*. I think that which made *David* so little successfull over his lusts after some small victory, was his security: as likewayes in *Peter*. There is no discharge in this war till death, and then we shall receive our everlasting arriers for all our toil.

Now to the second, those divine ends that *the Lord* hath in this, why Christians do not attain victory over their lusts, though in some small measure endeavouring constancy in war; it doth either proceed from this, that *God* knowes that we can better improve a wrestling estate than an overcoming

ing estate, while we are here below; we can better dispense with war, than we can with victory. Therefore, while we are traveling thorow this wilderness, he doth still keep us in exercise with serpents and scorpions: or it doth much proceed from this, that we may be kept in a constant dependence upon *God*, and may intertain a holy and constant correspondence with him: It is certain, that if we were not constrained to walk with God, through a principle of necessity, seldom would we walk with him through a principle of a Duty, or from a principle of love: for it is obvious to a Christian upon his secret search, that we walk most with *God*, when we stand most in need of him: It doth likewise proceed from this, that we may be kept humble while we are here below, and that we may not be exalted above measure; as also, that the grace and power of our *blessed Lord Jesus*, in helping us to overcome, may be rendered more conspicuous and evident, this being the great stage in which *Christs* power doth most eminently act and appear over our weakness, and the apprehensions of these insuperable difficulties, wherewith we are beset and oft overcome.

Now to shut up our discourse, we shall desire, that once ye may give up your names unto *Jesus Christ*, to fight under his royal banner, and believe me, though your corruptions were never so strong, yet at last he shall overcome them, the certainty whereof is made out unto you by this, that your blessed *head, hath led captivity captive*, and *is now exalted at the right hand of Majesty on high*: and the hope and expectation of that blessed issue may make you rejoyce *with joy unspeakable and full of glory*.

SERMON II.

Gal. 5. 24. *And they that are Christs have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*

O! When shall that great and excellent wonder be seen in heaven, which *John* did see, *Rev.* 12.1.6. to behold the invisible Church, and those that are expectants of heaven, which is that woman clothed and adorned with that spotlesse and beautifull righteousnesse of a crucified Saviour, which is pointed out, by her being cloathed with the Sun, and to be regulat by the Doctrine of the twelve Apostles, which are indeed those precious Stars that will bring us unto the place where *Christ* lyes, and will sweetly conduct us unto him; and withall to have that great Idol under our feet, *the world*, the divine emblem of which is the Moon, because it is subject to many vicissitudes and changes, and hath most different and contraty aspects: though we conceive, that if many Christians were to be painted, we might fix the Moon upon their head, for they use not the world as their servant, but as their Master; Mortification is an exercise that doth not sute with flesh and blood, it is a hard saying to a man settled upon the dregs of nature, and yet incorporate in that old stock: O! but it is sad Divinity to many, that except one die with Christ, they cannot reign with him, we must win to the fellowship of his sufferings, and be conformable unto his death, before we attain to the resurrection from

from the dead: we love to divide those things that *God* hath conjoyned, to take *Christ* for righteousnes and salvation, but not for a King and for sanctification: And if it was an evidence unto wise *Solomon*, that she was not the mother of the childe, who pleaded for the division of it, so it may be supposed, that he who will not take whole *Christ*, but would have him divided, is not one that is predestinated to the adoption of children: we confesse there are many that love Christs coat, rather than his graces, and if they pursue after those, it is more after those graces that are adorning them saving: And we conceive that there are these three graces that a hypocrite doth most pursue after; there is the grace of prayer, the grace of knowledge, and the grace of humility, and of the last we may say, a hypocrite may endeavour to person at it, but there is alwayes within his bosome some convictions of his little attainment: it is impossible for a hypocrite to think himself nothing; and, O! that we could once attain to that precious length of Christianity, as to be entertaining a holy oblivion of our attainments, and a sanctified memory of our imperfections; that the former may be written, as it were in the sand, and the latter might be engraven in the fleshly tables of our heart, and kept constantly upon record: we confess there is not much of our leaf that withers in these dayes, but much of our fruit withers and decayes: O! is not man become so brutish and ignorant, that he may be sent unto the beasts of the field to be instructed of that which is his duty: *Solomon* makes mention of four beasts upon the earth which are little and exceeding wise, *Prov.* 30. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28. all which may teach us some spiritual doctrine; first there are the Ants, who may teach us that grace of divine prudence, and Christian policy,

in laying hold on our occasions and opportunities, who though they be not a strong people, yet provide their meat in summer; and no doubt, we should be fighting with our spiritual enemies, while it is the day, for the night cometh wherein no man can fight: actions done in season, addes a great deal of luster and perfection to them, every thing being beautifull in its season: Secondly, there are the conies, who may teach us that grace of denyal, to distrust our own strength, and in the day of straits to run unto him who is that *Munition of rocks*, when the blast of the terrible one, is as a storm against a wall; for they being a feeble people, make their houses in the rocks; And no doubt, Atheisme and Idolatrie are the two great impediments of mortification, too much confidence in our selves, which is Idolatrie, and our too much diffidence in God, which is our Atheisme. Moreover, we may go to the locusts, which would teach us that primitive grace of unity, who though they want a King, yet go forth by bands: and lastly, we may go to the spider, which may teach us that grace of spiritual mindedness, and of aspiring after those sublime and excellent things of God, for they are in Kings palaces: and, O! to be more conversant with heaven, and those things that are above: this would make us to distaste these lower springs, and they would be to us as the waters of Marah.

But to come more particularly to the words, you have many precious things concerning Mortification holden forth, which is that precious and cardinal grace of which we intend at this time to speak; you have the infinit advantage of this grace held forth, to wit, that such do meet with divine intimation of their interest in Christ, and that they are Christs, which is indeed the high elevation of a Christian:

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And this is clear from the words, that such an one may from this gather, that his name was written in the ancient and precious records of heaven: And, no doubt, little divine wrestling with our corruptions, makes us to have the extract of our peace so often withdrawn to our sense: there is this held forth concerning it, the extensive nature of mortification, that a Christian ought not only to mortifie the flesh, which is original sin, which is so called, not only because of that wofull knot of amity and affection that is betwixt us and our lusts, hence that word, *no man ever hated his own flesh*; O! those invisible knots of union that are betwixt us and our lusts; but it is so called, because sin hath contaminat the whole man, so that *from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot*, there is nothing that is not defiled, as likewayes, because during our abode in those tents of mortality, we must have this wofull and sad companion, and there is an unchangable and unalterable decree of heaven that during our time of Minority, we should have that had associat; but more, a Christian should mortifie his affections, which are his predominant lusts, to which our affections are so much joyned, and our soul doth so much go out after; as also his lusts, which are the first motions and risings of corruption within one, and withall may comprehend the eschewing the first shadows and appearances of evil, *Prov.* 4. 14, 15. *Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men, avoid it, passe not by it, turn from it, and passe away*; our mortification should be als much of our invisible Idols, as our visible lusts.

There is this likewayes held forth, the difficulty and painfulnesse of this work under this notion of *crucifying*, which was one of the most painfull deaths: we conceive, that there are many who are of that

mans humour, who wallowing upon the grasse, cryed forth, *utinam hoc esset laborare*: there is, no doubt, more difficulty in this then we apprehend, we must not ly in the bed of ease, if we intend to be mortifying Christians, we must wrestle as princes with God, till we prevail; the longsomnesse of this work is also pointed at, under the notion of crucifying, it being a longsome death: we cannot ordinarily fight and triumph in one day; that ambitious letter of *Cesars* will not hold here, *Veni, Vidi, Vici*; we must die mortifying and strugling with our corruptions, and when one o four feet is within the borders of eternity to be sighing out that lamentation, *O wretched man that I am*, &c. You have also the intensive nature of mortification, that a Christian should be content with nothing but the death of his lusts, which is held forth in that word, *crucifie*. O! to bind our self with a holy oath and vow, not to dwell in much contentment, till we have gotten the life of our predominant lust: we must not give our idols quarter upon the most plausible and fairest termes of subjection, otherwayes, if ye do, I shall not say that word which the Prophet spake to *Abab*, that *your life shall go for his*; but sure I am that confederacy shall be broken, and likely not without many sorrows to your spirits. There is lastly, the certainty of this victory held forth in that word, *they have crucified*; it is here in the preterite time, as it were already accomplished and brought to passe; and no doubt, this may make us to rejoyce *with joy unspeakable and full of glory*, that once we shall have a triumphant song put in our mouth.

Now before we shall speak unto any of these, we shall speak to some few things as previous to be known; We shall not dwell long in pointing out the

the nature of Mortification; we conceive it thus, It is a divine quality of the Immortal soul derived from the efficacy and vertue of *Christs* death, whereby the strength of sin is impared, and its dominion taken away so that we should not totally nor with full consent yield our self unto that iron-yoke of our iniquity: Neither shall we stand long to prove that it is your duty to be much in the practice of this duty: It is clear not only from *Col.* 3. 5. *Mortifie therefore your members which are upon the earth*, but also from 1 *Pet.* 1. 15, 16. and, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. it ought to be our great design and aim to bring all those things in subjection, which stand in opposition to *Jesus Christ*, and it is the noble prerogative of those young men, 1 *Joh.* 2. 13, 14. that they have overcome that wicked one, and hath in some measure trodden Satan under their feet.

But we shall speak a little unto this, first, whether or not a Christian can fall again to the committing of that sin which once they have mortified and repented for, and which hath received an act of pardon? We conceive indeed (so far as we know) there can be no explicit proof given of such a case in scripture, that ever any of those that were heirs of the grace of life, did fall into that sin which they had once mortified and repented for: but however, we are confident to averre, that it is not inconsistent with a gracious estate, which we conceive is clear, not only from his names, but from his promises and from his commands; doth not that name, that he is *a healer of our backslidings*, and *the repairer of our breaches*, and that name, *he will multiply to pardon*, speak out that a Saint relapsing into a mortified sin, doth not put him without hope, Isa. 55. 7. *Hos.* 14. 4. but that he may have confidence that he shall not die but live, and declare the

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wondrous works of the Lord, though *God* may speak that word to him, which *Absalom* spake to *Hushai*, *Is this thy kindnesse to thy friend*: and withall, do not his promises speak this, *Jer.* 3. 22. *I will heal your back-slidings*; and do not his commands speak it, *Jer.* 3. 1. 12. 14. 22. how often is back-sliding Israel exhorted to return, and he who imposed that commandement upon us, to forgive our brother untill seventy and seven times, if he return and repent, will not his bowels be moved within him, towards a back-sliding heifer? But withall, to provoke you to beware of that sin, to sin after repentance and mortification, we shall propose these things. First, such a sin doth creat and beget much hardnesse and stupidity of heart, so that *your own back-sliding do reprove us*, and become not only our sin, but our punishment; and when *God hath spoken peace to us, should we again turn to folly?* Secondly, there is this to dissuade you, that such Apostacy as this, makes a Christian to losse the sense and comfortable assurance of their Interest, so that sometimes they will be even razing, as it were, the foundations: O! but back-sliders in heart are filled with the fruit of their own way, and are made to walk *in darknesse and to have no light*: it is much for a Christian to keep fast his hands, when after this manner, he hath lost his feet.

Fourthly, such an one doth ordinarily give much reins, and much liberty to his corruptions; that is indeed, their year of Jubilee and release, as is clear from *Jer.* 5. 6. where these two are joyned: and may not the nature and aggravating circumstances of that sin, make you to eschew it? Is it not a sinning against light? Is it not a sinning against God, after he hath appeared unto you twise? So that this may be the manner of your bemoaning your self. If it had been an enemy that had thus done, O Lord, thou

thou mightest have born it, but that it should be one, whom thou didst condescend to make thy familiar, and to take sweet counsel together with, that hath lift up his heel against thee; this no doubt is an iniquity of deep dye; and we shall only say this, that it is imprinted upon the effigie of godly *Judah*, *Gen.* 38. 26. that after his first fall with *Tamar*, he *knew her again no more*: And, no doubt, it were your advantage to obey that counsel, *let him that standeth take heed lest he fall.*

Now that which secondly we would speak to is, to propose something to you, by which you may know your growth in Mortification, since there are many that delude themselves in this, supposing that their lusts are really mortified, when they are but sleeping and that they are really cast out, when they only go out for a season: those are they that *are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not cleansed from their iniquity.* And before we shall speak any thing to this, we would have you considering these things. First, that there may be a growth of leases, where there is not much growth of fruit; a plentifull measure of profession, and yet much barrennesse in practice; there are some whose leaf doth not wither, though their fruit doth much decay, who have many specious appearances, and yet cannot say that the root of the matter is with them; and with all we would say, that there may be some real growth to the fruit, when there is not much growth to the root, so that though we spred forth our branches, yet we do not cast forth our root as *Lebanon*; we grow sometimes more in prayer, and knowledge, and joy of the *Holy Ghost*, then in mortification and humility, though there be a promise for both their growthes, *Hos.* 14. 5, 6. Now there is this secondly, that we would have you knowing, that there is a divine necessity

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for Christians to grow somewhat in all the graces of the Spirit, and *to bring forth fruits even in old age*, to be advancing in Mortification, to be ascending up in a divine conformity with God, till we shall be made like unto him: we confesse indeed, there are some sad interruptions, when we almost forget that we were purged from our old sins; And this necessity of growth, appears not only from this, that *Christ* is the head of believers, and they his members; this similitude the Apostle useth twise to expresse Christians growth, *Eph.* 4. 15, 16. *Col.* 2. 10. and no doubt, since *Christ* is the head, and we the members, we must grow till there be a divine conformity and resemblance betwixt us and our head; and are not we predestinate unto this divine and noble end, *Rom.* 8. 29. and must not we purifie our selves and endeavour to wash our selves from our spots, through that precious bloud of sprinkling, that *we may be holy, as he who hath called us, is holy.* And more, this is one end of that fulnesse, which was communicate unto *Jesus Christ our precious head*, ever *to make us compleat*, Col. 2. 9, 10. And as his fulnesse is for our growth, so our growth is for the making up of his fulnesse, *Eph.* 1. 23. Mystical *Christ*, will not be compleat, till once all his Members grow up *to the stature of the fulnesse of Jesus Christ*, and so from that, there is such an invisible knot of union and supernatural relation betwixt us and *Christ*, that a Christian must grow, and if once the first draughts and imperfect lineaments of *Christs* image be engraven on our soul, he will bring it unto perfection, since this is his noble prerogative, that his work is perfect. There is this also that speaks a necessity of a Christians growth in mortification, and all the graces of the spirit, that the faithfulnesse of all the persons of the blessed Trinity, is engaged for this, and is laid

laid in pawn: it is clear that the faithfulnesse of the first person of the blessed Trinity is laid in pledge, from *Psal* 92. 14, 15. *they shall still bring forth fruit in old age, to shew that the Lord is upright*, or faithfull: which we conceive doth relate to that promise made by the *Father* to the *Son*, in that ancient and eternal transaction, *Isa.* 53. 10. And is not the faithfulness of the *Son* laid in pledge, is not this commandement of the *Father* laid upon him, *that of all that are given to him, he should losse none, but raise them up at the last day*, Joh. 6. 39, 40. so that as *Christ* must be answerable to his charge, he must present all the gifted ones unto the *Father*, which presupposeth their growth in grace, and their being *made meet for the inheritance of the Saints in light*: and is not the faithfulnesse of the third person of the blessed Trinity likewayes ingaged in this? in that it is his great work, to apply *Christs* purchase, to reveal unto us the whole minde of *God*, and to communicate all things that are needful for us to know, and to guide us in all truth *Joh.* 16. 13. And if this be his work, will he not accomplish it, and bring it unto perfection? all which great works that are committed unto the *Holy Ghost* to do, have that sweet and precious result, *growth in grace.* There is this thirdly, that we would have you knowing, that there are some graces of the Spirit, of whose growth, before we can judge, there must be a time allotted; grace is not like the grasse of the field, which groweth in a night, and perisheth in a night: it is a wofull practice among many, they begin to search their growth, before they have well begun to grow; we would rather counsel you to grow, then to search your growth; though it is indeed a Christians duty to take notice, *to go up early to the vineyards, to see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pom-*

pomegranats bud forth; this is clear from *Cant.* 7. 12. and from *Psal.* 63. 8. where *David* taketh notice, not only of his following after *God*, but that his soul did follow hard after him: but if in this we may allude, we shall say this unto you, *Judge nothing before the time*, let your graces grow before you judge of their growth. And there is this lastly that we would say, that growing in grace and the fruits of the Spirit, is a mystery that is more taken up by faith, then by sense; we must grow by Faith, and by Faith we will best discern, especially under desertion, and when we are walking under a cloud, and *Christ* carves out bitter things unto us: we confesse indeed, when we are dandled upon his knee, and our cup of divine consolations is running over, and he covereth to us a table in the wilderness, then our growth may be known by sense.

But as to the question we proposed, we shall give you these evidences of your growth in Mortification: There is this first, those are admitted to read their names in those ancient and precious Records of heaven, and to know that they were engraven upon his heart, before ever the cornerstone of the world was laid; this is clear from *Rev.* 2. 17. and, 2 *Tim.* 4. 8. and the ground of it is this, that those who are wrestling as Princes with their lusts, and enduring the heat of the day, he lets them see a sight of the crown, and of that eternal felicity, that so they may endure that good fight of faith, and persevere to the end, that they may obtain that crown of life. And there is this ground of it also, because such are much in the exercise of those two cardinal and architectonick graces of the spirit, *faith* and *prayer*, by which much divine familiarity and fellowship with God is attained, and, so faith doth increase with the increase of God.

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There is this second evidence, when our lusts have not such power to disturb us in holy duties, as in prayer, hearing and meditating; if you have dispossessed those unclean things, and can go about those duties, with a great deal of more divine serenity, and composednesse of spirit; but if this be wanting, it is an evidence of no great growth in Mortification, as is clear from *Jer.* 23. 11. and *Ezek.* 33. 31. And we conceive, that this is an evidence of growth in Mortification upon those two grounds; First, A Christian that is much a victor in this blessed warfare, is oft-times under the dreadful impressions of the Majesty and Holinesse of *God*, by which those sinful stirrings and motions of his heart are much abated; by reason of his terrour, he cannot endure himself to be *with the fool in the ends of the earth*, because such a one hath power over his spirit and rules over it, so that he is not like a city broken down and without walls. O! but it is much for one, to subject all his thoughts to the obedience of *Jesus Christ*, to have nothing within him that lifts up the heel against the knowledge and excellency of *Jesus Christ*: and by the way, it is a wofull and irrational evil, that we lodge Christ in our face, and in our mouth, we speak of him, and seem to love him, but we lodge idols in our heart, that glorious and excellent Mansion, which should be kept for that excellent guest, that *immortal King of glory*, who is the light of the higher House.

There is this third evidence of growth to be much in exalting and magnifying of *Jesus Christ*, and lifting up of that burdensome stone of his praise; this was an evidence of *Pauls* growth in Mortification, *Rom.* 7. 25. 1 *Cor.* 15. 56, 57, 58. O! but one that hath really tasted of that noble thing, mortifying and pardoning grace their soul will esteem *Christ* matchless,

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and a divine neceſſity of ſpeaking out his praiſe and ſetting him on high, will lye upon them: There are two ſpecial times, when Chriſtians are put to a divine *non plus*, in ſpeaking out his praiſe, and are conſtrained to cry out that word, *Pſal.* 65. 1. *Praiſe waiteth for thee,* (or is ſilent) that is, it cannot be expreſſed. There is that time, when a Chriſtian is caught up, as it were, unto the third heavens, and hath ſome eminent diſcoveries of God, then they are conſtrained to cry out, *exalt thy ſelf, O Lord*; their thoughts are ſo high of him, that there can be no expreſſions found ſurable unto his worth; And we confeſſe indeed, it is hard, if not impoſſible, to commit any hyperbole in commending of him. And there is that ſecond time, when Chriſtians are able to turn the battle to the gate, and in ſome meaſure are enabled to conquer their ſpiritual enemies; then are they put to this, who can exalt him who is by infinit degrees exalted above our bleſſing and praiſe? Sometimes a Chriſtian is put to that ſpiritual poſture and heavenly frame, that he cannot make language of his thoughts of *Chriſt*, that though his heart could indite a good matter concerning the King, yet his tongue cannot be the pen of a ready writer.

There is a fourth evidence of a Chriſtians growth, when a Chriſtian hath more ſpiritual diſcoveries and inſight unto his corruptions and is more wreſtling againſt them: and we would have you conſidering theſe two things; 1. That diſcovery of boſome and inviſible luſts, is that which we mainly take to be meant in this evidence, and wreſtling againſt them; and there is this ſecondly, that all our victories over our luſts, ſhould increaſe our antipathy againſt ſin, and make us to be zealous, till once we ſhall obtain a compleat victory, and ſhall have accompliſhed our warfare.

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There is a fifth evidence of our growth, when the remembrance of our former luſts and Idols, do not provoke deſires, after the enjoyment of thoſe things again, but rather doth provoke the exerciſe of ſorrowes, that ever that ſhould have been our lot, to have been under the dominion of ſuch luſts and Idols: O! but there are many, to whom remembrance of their luſts will provoke their affections, *Ezek.* 23. 19. 21. and this ſpeaks much ſtrength of love, that the picture of his Idols, ſhould ſo much inflame him, and gain his affections; O! but looking upon our old ſins with an affectionat eye, ſpeaks litte growth in mortification.

There is this laſt evidence of our growth, our high and majeſtick thoughts of Chriſt and his Word, for if once our humours be purged out, we ſhall then *as new born babes, deſire the ſincere milk of the word*; and I am perſwaded, that as one doth obtain ſucceſſe in this precious warfare, he doth aſcend in his ſpiritual conception of *Chriſt*; ſuch an one is endeavouring that evangelick and heavenly captivity of affections, to have them all confined unto *Jeſus Chriſt*, that precious and excellent object: O! but one ſight of *Jeſus Chriſt*, in his matchleſs and tranſcendent comlineſſe, to behold that divine contemperature, harmony and conjunction of all ſpiritual graces that are in him, would it not provoke us to caſt away our Idols to the Moles and to the Barrs, and ſhould not they loſſe their beautiful hue and image? O! but eternally to contemplat that Infinit Majeſty that is in him, ſweetly contemperat with his lowlineſſe, ſo that we may ſay, there is both Majeſtick lowlineſs, and lowly majeſty in him, to ſee likewayes his infinite highneſs, and his matchleſs condeſcendency, to ſee his abſolute Soveraignty, and his unparallel'd humility, thoſe things if once they were attained, might make

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us to cry out, *who would not love thee, O King of Nations.*

Now that which we ſhall laſtly ſpeak to, ſhall be this, to ſhow unto you thoſe things that ſpeak and prove our ſoul-union and heart-conjunction with our Idols, that ſo we may be provoked to the mortification of them; There is this firſt, that we imbrace our Idols after frequent convictions of the diſadvantages of them, that after they have been ſeen in their own native collours, yet we dandle them upon our knee, like that word, *Iſa.* 57. 10. and that, *Jer.* 50. 38. *they are mad upon their Idols*, demented in their purſuits after them; and no doubt this ſpeaks a moſt unmortified frame, and one filled with the love of his Idols. There is this ſecondly, that ſpeak it, our imbracing of our Idols upon ſmall tentations, like that, 2 *Sam.* 12. 2,3. there are ſome tentations of our luſts to gain our affections, and ſome to gain our judgment; and to ſin without the propoſal of ſome great advantage, or ſome ſolacing delight or pleaſure, ſpeaks us moſt ſtrongly united to our luſts. There is this thirdly, that ſpeaks that infinite toyl and labour that we expoſe our ſelves to to ſatisfie our luſts; you will ſee it *Eccleſ.* 2. where *Solomon* making pleaſure and carnal joy his Idol, is put to much toyl to ſatisfie it: and believe it, it is more eaſie to mortifie your luſts, then to ſatisfie them, for that is impoſſible work; our Idols have two daughters that ſtill cry, *Give, Give*: our Idols are like the grave, the barren womb, the earth that is not filled with water, and the fire, who never cry, *It is enough*: our Idols have two attendants, *Impatience*, and *diligence*; we will weary our ſelves in the fire, to obtain ſatisfaction to our luſts; and if we do not attain it, we will curſe our King, and look upward. There is this fourthly, that ſpeaks our ſoul-union to our Idols, and it is imbracing of them, after application of threatnings, againſt thoſe who ſhould imbrace that ſin; and yet, to commit this ſin with lifted up hand, is indeed, to ſport with the juſtice of *God*, or rather to put a bill of defiance in his hand, ſuppoſing that we are above the reach of his juſtice and power. And there is this fifthly, that ſpeaks it, our killing of convictions, which tend to the diſcovery of the ſinfulneſſe of ſin, and preſſing upon us thoſe duties, by which we attain to the Mortification of them; and is it not certain, that we kill our convictions in the birth, and makes them to prove abortive? Love to our Idols is that which kills our convictions, and our killing of our convictions, is the mother of our love to our Idols: And there is this, laſtly, that ſpeaks our ſoul-union with our Idols; thoſe anxious ſorrows when we miſſe the enjoyment of our Idols, we are then ready to cry out, *It is better for me to die then to live*: and oft-times, when our Idols are taken from us, and are laid in the grave, our living luſts ſit down, and lament over the grave of our buried Idols, crying forth, *Ah, my Lord.* And ſince there are ſuch inviſible, and wo-full knots of union betwixt us and our Idols, we ſhould endeavour to have all theſe knots looſed, and to have our ſoul united unto him, by thoſe two pre-cious and golden chains of *Faith*, and *Love*, and to have our hearts a *Bethel*, a houſe for God, and a temple for the holy Ghoſt; and not a *Bethaven*, a houſe of Idols, and a cage for all unclean birds, that our ſpirits may be manſions for that *eternal Spirit*, and he may have an arbitrary power over us, and a negative voice in conducting us to heaven.

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SERMON III.

Gal. 5 24. *And they that are Christs have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*

MOrtification is that precious duty imposed upon man, not only by the law of Nature, but by the royal and excellent law of grace, Doth not the law and light of nature instruct man thus, it is better to kill then to be killed; and certainly, except a Christian be the ruine of his iniquities, iniquity shall certainly be his ruine; we shall either sing a song of triumph over our lusts, or our lusts shall sing a song of triumph over us; and doth not that royal law of liberty and grace enforce this upon us, while it desireth, that *we should crucifie our members which are upon the earth* and be aspiring after a divine conformity with the Image of the invisible God; Though we conceive, there be some, that if they would retire themselves a little to behold those subtile and invisible actings of the mystery of iniquity within them and those deep devices of Satan, and how many strange Lords, beside *Jesus Christ*, exercise dominion over them; they might be constrained to put in their *amen* unto that truth, that *it is more easie for a camel to passe thorow the eye of a needle, then for such unmortified Christians*, as many of us are, *to enter into the kingdom of God*. It is better for us to dwell in the house of mourning, then in the house of mirth, and we may say of much of the carnal joy that is amongst us, *Such laughter is mad,*

mad, and such mirth what doth it? we may wish for some retired cottage in the wilderness, where we may go aside, and spend our seventy years in the bitterness of our soul, and account it marvelous loving kindness, if we shall obtain hope in our end: It is without all debate, that the general & universal evil of our dayes is, that Christians are so little in the exercise of this precious grace of Mortification; we think, we take a greater latitude in our way to heaven, than that cloud of witnesses which went before us, did adventure to take; and it is certain, that if one from the dead were admitted to write Commentars upon the disadvantages of satisfying the lusts of the flesh they would point forth marvelous hurt and infinit losse in exercising any of those; as likwayes, if any from above were admitted to write upon the advantages *of crucifying the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof*, what precious commendation might they give to those that are exercised in those low, but exalting works of Mortification? Believe me this is most certain, that it is easier to mortifie your lusts, than to satisfie them: for we conceive, that such an one who is spending his precious time in the satisfying of his lusts: doth spend his time betwixt these three, the impatiency of his lusts, which still cry forth *give, give*; the impotency and weakness of the means he hath to satisfie such lusts, and the conviction of the impossibility of satisfying the insatiable desirs, and infinit lusts of sin: anxiety and sorrow are the constant attendants of a man that is not studying to crucifie his lusts and affections: and certainly, if we may allude to that word, *Jer.* 48. 10. *Cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood*, he is cursed, that doth not endeavour to crucifie and bring low the *seven abominations of his heart*, that we may with *Naphtali* and *Zebulun*

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jeopard our lives unto death in the high places of the field, and that there might be none of our lusts to cry forth within us, *the bitternesse of death is past*; but may endeavour to cut them in peaces before the Lord. We conceive, this work of Mortification, is the most pleasant exercise of a Christian, if not in its own nature, yet in its fruits and effects.

Now before we shall speak any thing unto those things which we proposed to speak of at the last occasion, we shall speak a little to this, what is the reason that Christians resolutions and purposes to quite such a predominant lust, and to forsake such an idol, do oft-times evanish without any fruit? All these cords of divine resolution by which they bind themselves, are but as tow and flax before the fire of temptation, they decreeing many things which are not established: And we confesse, this is so incident an evil unto his own, that sometimes they are resolved in nothing so much as this, to resolve no more; they in a manner give over the duty of resolution, because they are so short-coming in the duty of performance: And we conceive, that this is occasioned either through this, that Christians do no resolve upon the strength of a Mediator, or if they do resolve upon his strength, they are not much in the improvement of it for the bringing low of such an iniquity. And we conceive, this was the ground that *Peters* resolutions were brought so much low, and were blasted; and this is somewhat pointed at, *Isa.* 40. 30, 31. where it is said *even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall*; the greatest natural abilities which might help men to run and not be weary, and the most promising evidences from themselves, shall fail and be blasted; but (as it is in the 31. *v.*) *they that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength*, even those who are denyed

denyed to their own strength. And we conceive, that there are these two great mysteries of Christianity, first, to resolve so as being convinced of this, that we are not able, as of our selves, to think one good thought: And, secondly, which is a little more mysterious, to believe that *Christs* strength laid hold on by faith, is as effectual for the crucifying such a lust, as if it were our own proper strength and excellency: certainly, one that hath once swallowed this camel of Christianity, needs not strain at the lower gants of it: we would only say this by the way, study to flee comparative resolutions, for ordinarily these are much blasted, as was clear in *Peter* though *all shall forsake thee, yet I will not*: study to be positive in your resolutions, but beware of comparisons.

This is likewayes occasioned through this, that ordinarily they determine the mortifying of such a lust rather with their light than with their affections; as it is sometimes the exercise of a Christian, when he goeth to prayer for the mortifying of such a lust, his light prayeth more than his affections; and sometimes it falls out, that when light and judgment is praying for the mortifying of such an Idol, affection, as it were, entereth a protestation against the granting of such a desire, and in a manner saith, *Lord mortifie not such a lust.* This we conceive was the case and practice of those who are made mention of *Ezek.* 14. 4, 5. who came to enquire of the Lord, having their Idols in their heart: we may put our idols from our minde, but have our idols in our heart, when we come to seek the mortification of them; and we would only say this unto you, when ye begin to resolve, study to have your souls under a divine impression of the sinfulnesse of such a lust, as likewayes under the infinite disadvantage of following

ing such a lust; we conceive, that the ordinary time of a Christians resolution is, when they are blessed with the dew of heaven, and are admitted to taste of his sweetnesse; And oft-times Christians resolutions are rather according to their present frame, than according to that which probably will be their frame ere long; And this is the occasion that Christians, who are big in their resolutions, are often short and defective in their performances; or else we conceive it to be occasioned through Christians being too much given to sloathfulnesse, and that wofull idol of self-indulgency, they resolve fair, but do not take pains to accomplish their vows; This is clearly pointed at, not only, *Prov.* 13. 4. where it is said, *The sluggard desireth, but he hath nothing*: but more clearly, *Pro.* 21. 25. *The desire of the sluggard slayeth him*, and the reason is subjoyned, *because his hands refuse to labour*: It is most certain, that except a Christian be diligent, he can never be a mortifying Christian; Mortification is not attained with ease, we must travel in pain, and have the pangs of the new-birth before *Christ be formed in us*.

And there is this lastly, which doth occasion it, Christians do not propose to themselves a sublime and divine end in mortifying of their lusts; and certainly we conceive this is the most ordinary and incident case unto his own, we either propose this end in mortifying of our lusts, that we may have somewhat whereof to glory, and to make mention of our righteousnesse, *even of ours only*; or else we propose this carnal end, of studying to have a name continually amongst the living in *Jerusalem*, lest that inward mystery of iniquity that is within us be engraven on our fore-heads; and I think certainly, that name may be engraven upon many professors in this age which *Jude* giveth them, vers. 12. of his Epistle, he calleth them *twise dead*, that is, not only dead in reality, but that through the deceitfulnesse of sin, they had even lost any name of living they likewayes had, so that it was also evanished and gone away. I am perswaded, that were we known each on to another, as we are known to him, *who hath those seven eyes that run too and fro through the earth*, no doubt, we should wonder at the boldnes of our hope: and laugh at the strength of our delusions.

Now that which first we proposed to speak of from the words was this, the advantage which a Christian hath by the mortifying of his lusts, and being continually exercised in this precious warfare; and (as we cleared at the last occasion) the advantage of a Mortifying Christian was this, ordinarily such a Christian doth live under the impression of his interest in *God*, he is admitted to read his name written in the book of life: now this is clear from *Rev.* 2. 17. where he saith, *to him that overcometh*, who is in the way of overcoming, *will I give a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it*: as likewayes from *Rev.* 2. 11. *he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death*: as also from 2 *Tim.* 4. 8. where these two are sweetly conjoyned and linked together: and it must certainly be so, that a mortifying Christian is one that liveth under the divine impression of his interest in *God*, not only because of this, that one who is not mortifying his lusts, as it were, doth darken his hope and obscure his evidence; every dayes intermission of mortification, being (as it were) a score drawn through the extract of our peace with God, so that in processe of time that precious extract of peace becometh illegible unto us. And we shall say this, that a Christian who can keep the faith of his interest, without the exercise

Mortification, may ſuſpect the reality of ſuch aſſurance; mortification and aſſurance die and live together, are weak and ſtrong together: But likewayes it muſt be ſo, becauſe of this, that ordinarily *God* rewarderh a mortifying Chriſtian with the intimation of his peace, he takes them in unto the eternal purpoſes of his heart, and the ſecrets of his counſel, and lets him ſee his name written in the records of heaven, leſt he ſhould faint in the day of adverſity, and ſo prove his ſtrength to be but ſmall: did ye never know what ſuch a thing as this meant, that when ye were moſt ſerious in the exerciſe of Mortification, ye were admitted to behold that precious and everlaſting hope? There is this ſecond advantage that a Chriſtian hath by being continually exerciſed in this bleſſed warfare, and it is this, Mortification is that grace which keeps all the graces of the ſpirit in action and exerciſe; it is that ſuperior wheel, at the motion of which, all the inferior wheels do move and if we may ſo ſpeak, Mortification is this, its all the graces of the ſpirit combined in one, and exerciſing themſelves in one divine act; *Faith* is exerciſed by a Mortifying Chriſtian, not only in this, in drawing furniture from *Jeſus Chriſt* who is our head, but likewayes, in that it is that defenſive peece of armour, (it being called *the ſhield of Faith*) by which we quench the fiery darts of the Devil: this war will not proceed with much advantage, if faith be out of the field: So alſo the grace of *hope* is exerciſed by a Mortifying Chriſtian, for this is its exerciſe in this bleſſed warfare, to hold up the crown of immortal glory in its right hand, with this motto engraven upon it, *he that perſevereth to the end ſhall be ſaved, and obtain this crown of life*, which is the great encouragment of a Chriſtian in this exerciſe; Likewayes, the grace of *watch-*

watchfulneſs is exerciſed in this bleſſed warfare: for watchfulneſſe (if ſo we may ſpeak) is the centinel of the Chriſtian, that ſtandeth upon the watch-tower, and giveth warning unto a Chriſtian of the motions of his adverſary; watchfulneſſe warneth us when firſt corruption begins to ſtirre: So the grace of *love* is much exerciſed in this bleſſed warfare; for a Chriſtian where he beholds that divine and unſearchable compaſſion of *Jeſus Chriſt* which he exerciſeth towards it, in upholding it under its ſtraits, that when the archers ſhoot at him, and do grievouſly wound him, that yet his bow ſhould abide in its ſtrength, this makes the grace of love to burn and live within a Chriſtian. And laſtly, the grace of *Prayer* is much exerciſed in this bleſſed warfare, for when faith begins to die, and hope begins to loſſe its courage, when watchfulneſſe begins to ſleep, and love begins to be remiſſe, and to wax cold, then prayer as a flying Cherub, doth go to the Captain of our ſalvation, and deſireth that he might help them in the day of their need: prayer is the ſweet correſpondent of the Chriſtian betwixt heaven and earth: *prayer* ſtayeth upon the Mount with *Chriſt*, when *faith* and *watchfulneſs* are in the field with our corruptions and luſts that are in us: and we ſhall only ſay this by the way, I know not whether a Chriſtian be more obliged to *Jeſus Chriſt* for juſtification than for ſanctification; but we conceive it is better to conjoyn thoſe together, than to compare them one with another.

There is this third advantage that a Mortifying Chriſtian hath, ſuch a Chriſtian doth moſt ordinarily meet with moſt divine ſolace and intimate communion and followſhip with *God*; ſuch a Chriſtian is admitted to taſte of the honey out of the rock, and to be ſatisfied with the fineſt of the wheat. Would

ye know the reason why you have not been in heaven these many dayes? it is this, ye have not been fighting these many dayes. Now this is clear from *Rev.* 2. 17. where that promise is given to the mortifying Christian, that *he shall taste of the hidden manna*, which is the sweetnesse of *Jesus Christ*: as likewayes, *Rom.* 8. 13. *If ye through the spirit mortifie the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live*: as also, *Rom.* 7. 24. *vers.* compared with 25. where wrestling *Paul* doth receive songs of everlasting praise put in his mouth: would ye know the person that is admitted to sing one of the songs of *Zion*, while he is in a strange land? it is the Mortifying Christian: for when he is in the pursute of his enemies, he is then admitted to put out his finger, and taste of the honey, that his eyes may be enlightened. There is a mortification that is pleaded for by many in these dayes, whose highest advancement in this precious grace doth not consist in that which it is, in knowing and being convinced of, and mourning over sin; but this is their Mortification, that one should be dead to the sense and conviction of sin: we shall passe no other verdict upon such Antinomian Mortification as this, but only this, it is indeed the Mortification of godlinesse, it is a crucifying of repentance and holinesse, it is a killing of the new man within a Christian, as likewayes a quickning of the old-man in its lusts and affections; this Mortification is no other thing but Sathan transformed in angel of light, and this is a peece of that new Gospel which is so much preached in these dayes, which if an angel should bring from heaven, we ought not to believe it: this is no new light, but old darknes covered over with the vail of a glistering light. O! study to be much under the impressi-
n of the bitternes of sin, that so ye may taste of the
nsolations of the *holy Ghost*.

There

There is this fourth advantage that a Christian hath by being continually exercised in this warfare, which is, that such a Christian hath distinct and perfect discoveries, not only of the deceitfulnes of his own heart, but also of the subtilty of corruption and sin that doth assault him: a mortifying Christian is a most experienced Christian: this clear all along, *Rom.* 7. where wrestling *Paul* hath so distinct discoveries of himself, as he saith, there being a law in his members rebelling against the law of his minde, and bringing him into subjection. And certainly, there is much precious advantage that redounds unto the Christian by being convinced of the deceitfulnes of his own heart, and of that mystery of iniquity that is within him, for such a Christian doth attain to the exercise of the grace of humility; for when he beholdeth himself as in a glasse, he cryeth forth, *Wo is me! I am undone*: I think it is in some sense lawfull for Christians to practice much of *Peters* divinity, which he had, *Luk.* 5. 8. *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man*; not that it was well argued by him, but it spake forth the high apprehensions he had of the holines of God, and the low apprehensions he had of himself: likewise, such a Christian is much denyed to his own strength, and so is necessitate to go unto one on whom his strength is laid, as likewise such a Christian is much in the exercise of the grace of watchfulnes; he is not ignorant of the devices of Sathan, which make him to stand continually upon his guard, lest he be overtaken with the snare of the devil.

There is this fifth advantage that a Christian hath by being much in the exercise of mortification, he doth attain to much divine conformity with God, and is made a partaker of the divine nature, of that

invisible Majesty: this is clear from *Rev.* 3. 5. where that promise, *I will cloath him in white*, is in a part accomplished to a Christian, even while he is in this valley of tears. And certainly, this is the compend and sweet epitome of all Christian advantages, to be made like unto the Majesty of God; and it is not a conformity unto him for a day, but such a mortifying Christian, is most constant in keeping the divine lineaments, and spiritual characters of that precious image undefaced in him; as it is promised, *Rev.* 3. 12. *Him that overcometh, I will make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out:* And certainly that promise of stability, is in a part accomplished to a Christian, even while he is here below: what could a Christian desire more then this, to be admitted to partake of the image of the invisible God, and to be made like unto him?

There is this last advantage that a Christian hath, by being continually exercised in this precious work of mortification, such an one hath his antipathy and hatred against sin much increased: would you know the Christian that liveth under the impression of the sinfulnesse of sin? it is the mortifying Christian. I think that vain distinction which Papists have, of mortal and venial sins, Christians in their practice do much allow and commend; there are some sins seems venial to them, which to commit and exercise, they take a latitude to themselves, as may be clear in this, a Christian will without much difficulty, if he be not tender, commit such things as are not consistent with the exercise of grace within him; he needs no other toleration but this, to have this made out to him that there is a consistency betwixt such a lust, and the living and spiritual nature of grace within him: but, no doubt, if we argued right,

right, we should be provoked to desist from sin, even from the disadvantages that attend the pursuing after any lust.

Now that which we shall speak to next, shall be this, what disadvantages a Christian hath by an interruption of this spiritual warfare, and not being much taken up in the exercise of Mortification. If this question were proposed to many, when they did last set some hours apart to mortifie their sins? the most part should be put to a *non plus*, not knowing the last time when they were exercised in this precious warfare. And I would only say this, a Christian that can interrupt the work of Mortification for some weeks together, may either suspect that grace is groaning within him, with the groanings of a deadly wounded man; or else that he is not at all begotten unto a lively hope, there is no forloffe nor discharge in this warfare; but we must fight till once the one foot be within that place of everlasting delight.

There is this second disadvantage that attendeth a Christian who interrupteth this warfare, ordinarily such a one doth contract much hardnesse and impenitency of heart; this was clear in the practice of *David*, who when once he intermitted this war, could write a letter to the killing of godly *Uriah*, and no mention of fraiting of heart: This is certainly a constant attendant of one who is not mortifying himself, he maketh his heart *die as a stone within him*: the mortifying Christian keeps this holy Zeal within him, *he hateth the garments spotted with the flesh*: would ye read the original and rise of hardnesse of heart in these dayes amongst us? It is this, Christians are not much in the exercise of Mortification; And I believe the Gospel hath been preached nigh six thousand years, and it is much to be debated,

bated, if ever misbelief, and hardneſs of heart were ſo univerſal diſeaſes among Chriſtians as in theſe dayes: we think to win to heaven by gueſſe, which maketh us ſo little intend this bleſſed work.

There is this third diſadvantage, that a Chriſtian meets with, by the intermiſſion of this warfare, and it is this, that ordinarily ſuch a Chriſtian hath his luſts moſt reigning and living within him: Sin will gather more ſtrength, by the interruption of one dayes exerciſe of Mortification, than ye can prevail over, by wreſtling with it many dayes: This is that ſubtil dexterity of ſin, it can recruit it ſelf in few hours with much eaſe; and certainly, if ye be not conſtant in this warfare, it is like ye will not ſing many ſongs of triumph over your luſts: he muſt be conſtant in this fight, who would be a triumpher in the fight: how long is it ſince ye ſet up an *Ebenezer* to God, ſaying, *hitherto hath he helped me?* and when did ye ſet up trophies and monuments of your victory? We think the Chriſtians of this age, leave feweſt and leaſt trophies of their victory in the way to heaven, as ever any that went before them.

There is this fourth diſadvantage which a Chriſtian hath, by the intermiſſion of this warfare, and it is this, that ordinarily ſuch a Chriſtian liveth without ſight of return, and overcoming at the laſt: A Chriſtian who interrupteth this exerciſe of mortification, fighteth as we ſpeak, with a doubtful war, not having determined whether the fight ſhall be in his favour or not; there is ſomewhat of this pointed out in 1 *Tim.* 4. 8. where *Paul* fighting in an agony, as the word importeth, perſwadeth himſelf that he ſhall have that crown of righteouſneſſe, which is the ſutable reward of a conquering Chriſtian: and believe me, I know not what ſhall afford

afford a Chriſtian, more Chriſtian peace and conſolation than this; to believe, that *he ſhall put all enemies under his feet, and make them his footſtool.*

There is this fifth diſadvantage, that a Chriſtian interrupting the exerciſe of mortification hath, and it is this, that ordinarily ſuch a one, when he is paſſing thorow the firſt and ſecond gates of death, and when he is to render up an account of his ſtewardſhip, hath leaſt perſwaſion of his intereſt in God. Would ye know the reaſon, why Chriſtians die with ſo little faith of evidence? It is this, they have not been much in the exerciſe of Mortification; certainly the conviction of ſhirking in this duty, and the apprehenſion of eternity and of approaching judgement, are two ſweet companions together: I think, next to Juſtification and Faith in *Jeſus Chriſt*, which is the hinge of all our conſolation, a Chriſtian hath moſt peace in the work of Mortification, in the day when he ſhall be ſtanding upon that utmoſt line betwixt time and eternity. O!! what conſolation had old *Paul*, when he ſpake theſe words, when he was ready to be diſſolved; *I have fought the good fight of faith*; I doubt much, if ever *Paul* ſang a ſong of praiſe upon a higher key, than when he ſung that ſong, 2 *Tim.* 4. 8. *I have fought the good fight of faith*: *Pauls* heart was half tranſported, when he did reflect upon this, that all his luſts were dying and killed at his feet.

And there is this laſt diſadvantage that attends a Chriſtian, who interrupts this warfare, that ordinarily ſuch a one is much blaſted of God, in the exerciſe of other graces; yea more, he is blaſted in the exerciſe of gifts; theſe two loſſes will attend a Chriſtian who interrupts this warfare: and certainly, if a Chriſtian be blaſted in grace, and be not blaſted in gifts, it is one of the ſoreſt ſtroaks that

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can befall him; for ordinarily, it is a pillow sewed under our arm-holls, which maketh us pursue sin without fear: this is secretly hinted at, *Eccles.* 2. 9. where that which made *Solomon* rove after his Idols, was this, *Also my wisdom remained with me:* he was as wise a man now, as he war before. And certainly, when gifts are vigorous, and graces not, they may sit down and lament over themselves *seven nights and seven dayes.*

Now we shall shut up our discourse at this time: we shall only speak a little to this, what may be spoken for consolation to those who are somewhat serious in accomplishing this warfare, and yet have not sensible advantage, nor successe over their lusts, who have been toiling all night, and yet have catched nothing; And we conceive, that God doth ordinarily propose to a tender Christian these three divine ends, by carving out to them such a lot, first that he may be kept in a constant correspondence with the Throne of grace; he, in a manner, wounds us in our leg, that we may not wander much abroad from his Throne: and certainly, Christians may be convinced of this, that if they had their will in Mortifying, they would not be much in corresponding; which may be demonstrat unto you thus; because that which provoketh one to converse with God, is rather a principle of necessity, than a principle of love: a Christian will go six times to prayer, yea many times, from a prineiple of necessity, before he go twise from a principle of love and delight. Secondly, That the Christians faith may be put to trials and exercised, whether or not we will believe and rest upon him, notwithstanding that we see not Mortification growing within us: we confesse, our little advancement in Mortification, is the foundation of misbelief: and certainly

certainly, to his own, God hath this design, even the trial of their grace, whether or not they will believe and *hope against hope.* Thirdly, The Lord doth it, because he knoweth that a Christian can better improve his little advancement in Mortification than he can improve his great successe; believe me it is certain, that in a Christians advancement in grace, it is more difficulty to bear it, than to bear his little advancement and progresse in grace; and the great reason and occasion of it is, because ordinarily pride and arrogancy do blossom and spring off this precious root of grace; for what doth decrease to a Christian of the lust of the eye, and of the flesh, seems to accrease to the pride of life; for as the one seemeth to go down, the other doth ascend and go up. And to you who never knew what this exercise of Prayer and Mortification meant, (are there not many here who never knew what it was to have any change in their life?) We would only propose this unto you, did ye never know what it was to be under the impression of the sinfulnesse of sin? or, did you ever know what it was to water your coutch with tears, under the impression of it? like that word, *Psal.* 32. 3. where *David* saith, *when I kept silence, my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long.* That word *roaring* speaks forth not only this, that sometimes a Christian doth rather mourn as a beast, than complain as a man, (*roaring* being the voice of a beast) but likewayes speaks forth this, that sometimes Christians are under such an exercise, that the open field is a more fit place for them, then the secret retirements of their most quiet chambers. *David* was forced to roar as a beast, when the bones which are the pillars of his house, were waxing old and mouldering within him: certainly the day is coming

coming, when ye who never knew what it was to crucifie a luſt, *Chriſt* ſhall crucifie you upon that croſſe of everlaſting pain, when he ſhall treade you in the win-preſſe of the indignation of the moſt High, when he ſhall make the arrowes of his indignation ſharp upon you; ye who will not quite ſin, ſin ſhall once be your eternal companion: and when Chriſt hath been inviting you ſo often to quite ſuch luſts, and ye return ſo often an negative anſwer to him, this will be the ſentence, which ſhall be paſt upon you; *Be it unto you, even as you will, they are joyned to Idols, let them alone*; and certainly, when Chriſt ceaſeth to be a reprover, that man is in a ſad and deſperat eſtate. O! that ye might once fight this good fight of faith: your ſcent doth remain with many of you; are there not many here who never knew what it was to ſpend an hour in ſecret wreſtling and debating with their luſts? The ſtrong man keeps the houſe, and ſo all is at peace with them; there is no going out, nor coming in at the gates of their city; but peace is, as it were, exactors of that houſe; and thoſe bear ſway within it. O! curſed be that peace which ſhall end in everlaſting warre with God. Would ye know the exerciſe and caſe of thoſe who are in everlaſting chains? We can repreſent it under nothing ſo fit as this, it is infinit juſtice and infinit omnipotency, wreſtling and cruſhing finit and ſinfull man; ſometimes the peſtil of divine wrath coming down upon one part of his body, and at another time upon another; they are now living an endleſſe life of death, and are ſpending their dayes in a dying life, they ſhall be eternally dying, and yet never able to die. Are there not ſome of you, who are ſo joyned to your Idols, that if *Dives* ſhould come from hell and preach this text to you, *Crucifie your luſts*.

luſts, ye would ſtop your ears at that precious exhortation. Ye may hide ſin under your tongue, but be perſwaded, that at laſt it ſhall be in your belly as the poiſon of Aſps, and as the venome of Dragons. And we would leave this advice and counſel upon Chriſtians, who have begun this precious warfare, *ſtand faſt to the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made you free, and be not entangled again into that yoke of bondage.* Sin is a yoke that neither we nor our fathers were able to bear; and we deſire you to meditate upon this advice, Study to be as much in mortification, and in the exerciſe of this duty, as if ye were to obtain ſalvation by works; but withall, ſtudy to be as much denied unto thoſe things, and to have as low an eſteem of your ſelves, as if ye were bound to do nothing, or had done nothing at all: ſtudy to work as one that is a legaliſt indeed, and one who deſires to maintain good works, but ſtudy ſelf-denial, as one that hath fled for refuge unto that bleſſed hope that is ſet before you. *Chriſt* is ſtanding at the end of the walk of a Mortifying Chriſtian, with a crown in his right hand, and he deſireth us to perſevere unto the end, that we may obtain that immortal *crown* one day with precious *Chriſt*, ſhall be an infinite recompenſe of all our toil; and the more exerciſe of mortification you are put to, heaven will be more ſweet and delightſome unto you.

SERMON

SERMON IV.

Gal. 5. 24. *And they that are Christs have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*

SUch is that universal stupidity and hardness of heart that hath overtaken the professors of this generation, that if *Christ* should come from heaven, and read over unto us the compleat rol of our iniquities, and show unto us these records, in which all our wanderings are written, the most part of us would not be much affected, nor much in the exercise of sorrow. No doubt, it is easier for a camel to passe thorow the eye of a needle, than for stupid Christians, such as we are, to enter into the Kingdom of *God*. It is one of the mysteries of his overcoming grace, that he hath not broken these two precious staffes of beauty and bands amongst us, that he hath not broken the covenant of his peace, and ceased to entertain so near a relation betwixt himself and us. As likewayes, it is a mystery of his love, that we are not made eternal monuments of the justice of *God*, and this Motto engraven upon us, *behold these that made not God their refuge*: *God* is glorious in the exercise of all his holy attributes, but in none more, than in the exercise of his patience and long-suffering toward us; and in a manner he darkeneth the glory of his justice, and casteth a vail over his spotlesse holinesse, that the exercise of the attribute of patience and long-suffering, may be

be rendered more conspicuous. I only pose you with this question, is not mortification a mystery unto your practice? Can such a delusion as this overtake you, that ye shall reign with *Christ*, though your lusts reign with you as long as ye are here? It is certain ye know, that mortification is that precious exercise in which ye ought to be taken up: and I conceive, that there is only this difference betwixt sinning against Light, and that unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, that the sinning against Light, is a sinning against the common work of the spirit upon your understanding, but the sin against the Holy Ghost, is a sin against the *common* work of the spirit upon the affections: and no doubt, there is a near bordering betwixt these two, it is the first step to it, by which ye go up and ascend unto the acting of this sin. It is a faithful saying (saith the Apostle *Paul*) that *if we die with Christ, we shall also reign with him*; and we may likewayes say, It is a faithful saying, that if we be not with Christ, and be not conformed unto him in his suffering, we cannot be conformed unto him, in the power of his resurrection: ye are all willing to take *Christ* as a *Justifier* and as a *Saviour*, but unwilling to take him as a *Sanctifier* and as a *Prince*: but know this, that the gifts of this spotlesse Lamb, are so sweetly linked together, that they were like his own coat that was upon his body, which was without seam that could not be divided: and so except the whole gifts of *Jesus Christ* fall unto us by divine lot; we can have no part nor portion therein: This Mortification is the compend of Christianity; and certainly, a Christian reading these words, he may stand amazed and be ashamed at his own stupidity, that interest in *Christ* should be connected with such a degree of Mortification, though we con-

conceive, there be many who take to themselves the name of Christians, that never knew what it was to exercise themselves in Mortification.

I shall only (before I speak to that which mainly we intend to speak to) press this grace of Mortification upon you by these things. First, This may enforce this duty of Mortification of lusts, because it is impossible for one to satisfie their lusts, let them accomplish never so diligent a search to find satisfaction to them; therefore ye would be undeceived and convinced of that delusion, ye conceive that if your lusts had their desire, they would be satisfied, but that is most clearly held forth to be false, *Psal.* 78. 29, 30. where it is said of their lusts, *they got their hearts desire*, and the word that is subjoyned, *yet were they not estranged from their lusts.* Let a covetous man suppose this with himself, that upon the having of so many thousands in the world, his lust of covetousnesse would be satisfied; but *Job* doth refute this, chap. 20. 22. saying, *in the fulnesse of his sufficiency, he shall be in straits*: It is easier to mortifie your lusts, then to satisfie them. And this secondly we would say, that though ye hide sin under your tongue, and though it be sweet unto you, yet know, that the day is approaching when it shall be in your bowels, as the gall of Aspes, and as the poyson of Dragons: know this for a certainty, that the momentany pleasures of sin which they afford unto you, are not worthy to be compared with that eternal weight of unsupportable misery that shall be inflicted upon you. O! but it is a terrible sight to behold *a living God* entring eternally in the lists with a poor sinfull sinner, to have omnipotency and justice fighting against the dust of his feet. There is this lastly which we would say, not exercising your selves constantly in this precious work

work of Mortification, doth interrupt much precious fellowship, that you might have with *Christ*; ye that are tasting of the sweetnesse of sin, cannot taste of the sweetnesse of heaven: this is clear, *Rom.* 8. 13. where mortifiers have that promise, that *they shall live.* And I shall only say this by the way, we conceive it to be a question that is difficult to determine, whether it be more for the advantage of one that is under any predominant lust, to have the objects upon which it feeds withdrawn, or to have them furnished, to feed upon: as for instance, if one be under the wosul predominant of pride, it is a question whether the want of occasion to exercise and feed that lust, be better, or to have it; proud *Achitophel*, when he wanted the objects upon which pride doth feed, he will go and strangle himself; and when we have them furnished unto us, what secret Idolatry, what desperat Atheism do we commit in the secret temples of our heart, and in the chambers of our Imagery? Mortifie more, or ye shall pray lesse.

Now that which we intend mainly to speak to, is that second thing which we proposed concerning Mortification, from these words, and it was the extent of Mortification, that they did not only crucifie their predominant lusts, which are here called *affections*, because they are Idols, and these are linked together by that passion of love; but likewayes they ought to mortifie the first motions and stirrings of corruption, and all occasions to it, which are here called *lusts*: but moreover, one that is a spiritual mortifier, must mortifie original sin, which is here called *the flesh*, as oft-times it hath that name in Scripture, an exercise which is unknown to many, if not unto all: we think original sin but a *Zoar*, and it is hard indeed, to be convinced of

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the sinfulnes of original sin, and to take it up in its native collours. Now in speaking upon the work of Mortification of original sin, we shall not insist long upon this, that It is the duty of a Christian to be exercised in the crucifying of this sin, it is clear from, *Col.* 3. 5. where we are commanded to mortifie *our members*; and it is clear from the practice of *Paul*, Rom. 7. 24. *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?* there is a strong Emphasis in the word *me*; as if *Paul* would have said, if Infinit grace can have bounds, then, no doubt, sinful *Paul* is the bounds fixed to it.

We shall for more clear speaking to this, first, speak a little unto this, what is original sin; and we conceive, that it stands in these, original sin is the imputation of that transgression of *Adam* unto us; for he being a common and representative person, we fell in his falling, and did stand in his standing, but likewayes original sin doth comprehend this, want of original righteousnesse, man not being created after that noble pattern and divine Idea, *the Image of God*; man now carrieth but the Image of *God* in his wisdom and in his omnipotency, but while he was in his primitive estate, he did carry an impression of the holinesse of *God*: as likewayes original sin doth comprehend this, a proneness to the committing of all evil, as also an ineptitude and unfitnesse for the doing of any good, and this is that which we are all by nature. The first part of original sin is clear from *Rom.* 5. 12, and 14. verses. And the rest may be gathered from many places of Scripture, but is comprehended in that one word, *Eph.* 2. 1. *we were dead in sins and trespasses*: one can no more move in the acting of any spiritual good, than if he were one altogether without life.

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We shall secondly speak a little to those advantages that a Christian may have, by being convinced of original sin: It is most certain, that a Christian is lesse convinced of original corruption, than he is of any actual transgression almost that doth befal him; and (as we were speaking) the reason of it doth proceed partly from this, that a Christian taketh not up the sinfulnes of original sin, though it be a sin having more in it, than is in twenty, yea an hundred actual transgressions: or else it proceedeth from this, that Christians are not convinced what influence original sin hath upon all the outward actings of iniquity; it is that fruitful womb that doth alwayes bear twins, and is never barren; it is that root that doth dayly bring forth wormwood and gall: or else it doth proceed from this, that we think that original sin is not our own, and that we are not so guilty, as if indeed we had eaten this cursed Apple.

But as to the advantages of being convinced of original corruption, we conceive that there is this first advantage, That it is impossible for any to have high thoughts of *Jesus Christs* love, and of the offer of mercy, except he be convinced of original sin: Would ye know the reason why *Christ* hath so small an esteem among you? it is because of this, ye are not convinced of your original corruption: this is somewhat pointed at, *Rom.* 5, 6, 7, 8. verses, where the Apostle heighteneth the love of *Christ* in dying for us, he pitches upon this to commend it, our original corruption, that *we were sinners and without strength.* O! what a mystery is the condescending grace of *Christ* unto a sinner believing original corruption; it is as it were, the foundation upon which all our esteem doth arise and spring: there is somewhat of this likewayes pointed at *Rom.* 7. 24.

7. 24. compared with verſ, 25. where *Paul* beginning to commend free grace, his ſong doth ariſe to the higheſt key, becauſe he hath been convinced of *this body of death that dwelleth within him.* I would only ſay this, if you would learn this divine leſſon of putting a high accompt upon *Chriſt*, ſtudy original corruption much.

There is this ſecond advantage that a Chriſtian hath from the conviction of it, and it is this, it doth exceedingly commend the omnipotency of his grace in mortifying corruption, when ye are convinced of this ſin: when was it that *Paul* had the higheſt accompt of the omnipotency of the grace of *Chriſt*? was it not when he was forced to cry forth, *O! wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from this body of death?* And this is certainly pointed at, *Eph.* 2. 1. where the quickening vertue of grace, is commended from this, the object upon which it is exerciſed, *ye that were dead in ſins and treſpaſſes.*

There is this third advantage, that floweth from conviction of original ſin, and it is this. It is a compendious way to keep the Chriſtian under the exerciſe of humility, under the higheſt attainments of Mortification, or under the higheſt attainments of communion and fellowſhip with God. Would ye know the reaſon why we are ſo eaſily puffed up under ſome ſmall ſucceſſe, or ſome ſmall familiarity with *Chriſt*? It is want of reflect thoughts upon original corruption that is within us: Therefore I would preſcribe this to Chriſtians under their higheſt advancement by grace, to ſit down and ſeriouſly reflect upon that which they are by nature, *that their father is an Amorite, and their Mother an Hittite,* and the rock from whence they are hewn, may preach humility to them; this is clear, *Rom.* 7. 24. where

where *Paul* under the conviction of original ſin, calleth himſelf a *wretched man*, and is clear alſo from the 9. verſ. of that Chapter, where when once original ſin is diſcovered, *he died* in his own apprehenſions: if we were in the apprehenſion of this more, the wind of the wilderneſſe would not bind us up in her wings, till our ſubſtance were diſſolved.

There is a fourth advantage a Chriſtian hath from the conviction of original corruption, and it is this, it keeperh the Chriſtian under the deepeſt impreſſion of the ſinfulneſſe of ſin. I confeſſe, that is one of the greateſt myſteries of Chriſtianity, to have our ſoul conſtantly under the impreſſion of the ſinfulneſs of ſin, which we conceive, is impoſſible to be attained without ſolid conviction of original corruption: this is ſomewhat hinted at, *Rom.* 7. 13. when *Paul* once by the Commandment, having original ſin diſcovered, ſin became unto him *exceeding ſinfull*: and the reaſon why original ſin diſcovered, hath ſuch influence upon this, is becauſe ordinarily we conceive, that the actings of ſin do not proceed from our ſelves, but from *that deceiver of the brethren*, which *James* doth abundantly refute, for when a man is tempted, *he is entiſed by his luſts.*

There is this fifth advantage that a Chriſtian hath by being convinced of original ſin; It is an excellent way to keep the Chriſtian under a moſt watchful and fearing frame: ſuch language would not been heard out of a *Hazaels* mouth, *Am I a dog to commit this,* if he had been convinced of original ſin; but becauſe he was a ſtranger to this, his preſumption led him above that which was indeed within him: therefore, when one is convinced of their proneneſs to act iniquity, of their want of that conformity with God, they remember to ſtand upon their

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watch-tower leſt they be enſnared: this is moſt clearly pointed at, 1 *Cor.* 9. laſt, where *Paul* is put to this exerciſe, I *bear down my body, and bring it into ſubjection*; and the reaſon is ſubjoyned, becauſe he was poſſeſſed with a holy jealouſie of himſelf, and entertained a divine ſuſpicion, which was conſiſtent with the acting of hope. I know nothing to make a Chriſtian watch over his own heart ſo much as this; to ſee that ſpawn of iniquity which is within him, to behold that fruitful mother of iniquity which never was declared barren, and never ſhall be, till ſin ſhall be no more within his own.

There is this ſixth advantage a Chriſtian hath, by being convinced of original corruption; It is that which will keep the ſoul under the higheſt eſtimation of *Chriſt*, and will make the grace of love to burn moſt vigorouſly within a Chriſtian: O! but when one ſhall reflect upon theſe two, the ſpotleſſe *holineſſe of Chriſt*, that abſolute purity of that precious Lamb, and ſhall again deſcend to reflect upon theſe myſteries of iniquity which are within himſelf, it is no wonder that ſometimes he be put to uſe *Peters* divinity, to cry forth, *Depart from me, for I am a ſinfull man*; but when he improveth the ſight moſt fully, his caſe is, to have his ſoul tranſported, and as it were, in a holy extaſie of love, toward that precious and matchleſs One.

And there is this laſt advantage that a Chriſtian hath by being convinced of original ſin, It is that which putteth a Chriſtian to a holy diffidence in his own ſtrength, and maketh him to be much in the employment of the ſtrength of him whoſe name is *Jehovah*. What is the reaſon that Chriſtians commit a breach of that firſt Command, ſo much truſting to their own ſtrength, and not making mention of *his righteouſneſſe*, and laying hold upon *his*

his ſtrength, even upon his only? It is this, becauſe we do not dwell under the conſtant impreſſion of original corruption. We conceive it is as great a myſtery to mens judgement, as it is a myſtery to their practice, to mortifie it. What made *Paul* ſo much to cry forth, *Rom.* 7. 18. to diſclaim his own ability, and *vſr.* 23. was it not the conviction of original ſin which was within him?

Now, that which we ſhall ſecondly ſpeak unto, ſhall be this, to preſſe a little upon you the neceſſity of the mortification of original ſin: and we conceive theſe things point out its neceſſity; firſt, this, That all mortification is in vain, and as the beating of the air, untill once original corruption be mortified: What is all your mortification without this? It is, as it were, the lopping off of the branches, while the root doth remain intire, it is a damming up of the ſtreams, while the fountain is ſtill running; and no doubt, that mortification will eaſily grow vain: you muſt once mortifie this which is the mother of ſin. And we would only ſay this by the way, that under correction, we conceive, that original ſin is not, nor cannot well be mortified in the body, but only is to be mortified in the members, that is we muſt ſtudy to mortifie ſuch a part of original ſin, to mortifie ſome living luſts, which are within us, and to be groaning under the reſt; for we conceive, it is hard to take up the whole body of original ſin, and to make that the ſubject of mortification, or to lament over it.

There is this ſecondly, which ſpeaks forth the neceſſity of Mortification of original ſin, it is that which is an undeniable evidence of a Chriſtian, to be taken up in the mortifying of this ſin; for we conceive it to be impoſſible for a hypocrite to attain to ſuch a length, as to ſtudy the real mortifi-

cation of original corruption: It was the practice of these two holy men, the Apostle *Paul*, Rom. 7. 24. and of *David*, Psal. 51. 5. where they sit down to lament over the iniquity which was within them. And the reason why the mortification of original sin, is an undenyable character and evidence of a Christian, is not only from this, that one that setteth about the mortification of original sin, is a Christian that hath most distinct discoveries of himself, as likewayes some discoveries of the holiness and spotlesnesse of God. It is hard to be convinced of original sin by the light of nature, if at all, for to us it is a question, if he can be, which the Apostle seemeth to intimate, *Rom.* 7. 7. Saying, *I had not known lust, except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*

There is this, thirdly, which speaks forth the necessity of the mortification of original corruption that all the duties that proceed from a Christian are exceeding defiled and polluted, except he endeavour the mortification of this sin: for this was a paradox to the Apostle. *James*, chap. 2. 11. *That a fountain at one place shall send forth bitter water and sweet*: and till the fountain of corruption be removed, it is probably to be conceiveed, that all the actings of duty by us shall be exceedingly polluted. O! but when original sin lyes without the stroak of a Christians mortification, his duties will not ascend with acceptance upon his Altar.

And there is this fourthly which pleads the necessity of the Mortification of original sin, that it is that sin which doth exceedingly war against the grace of God in a Christian: would you know why grace is in such a languishing estate? it is because of the power of original sin. We conceive this, that the opposition of original sin to the advancement of

grace, is more invisible and the opposition of actual corruption unto the actings of grace, is more visible and obvious; but certainly that which doth intangle a Christian in his walk, and maketh him not to ascend as pillars of smoak from this present wilderness, is *that original sin*; this is clear from *Rom.* 7. 23. and, *Gal.* 5. 17. Where *the spirit warreth against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit, and these two are contrary one to another.*

Now that which thirdly we shall speak upon the mortification of original sin, shall be this, what is the way how a Christian may be convinced and brought unto the spiritual impression of original sin? And certainly we conceive, that if a Christian shall exercise himself in these three, he may attain to some spiritual convictions of this sin. First, let him be much in the exercise of self examination, and when he shall reflect upon himself, he will behold the invisible motions of iniquity unto every sin that hath been named among the Gentiles: who is so great a stranger unto his own heart, but if he will reflect upon it, may sometimes see the stirrings of unknown (aloft) corruptions, which sparkleth that aloud to the Christian, that there is a fountain and spring within him, that would send forth such bitter waters, except they were graciously restrained.

There is this secondly, by which a Christian may be brought to the conviction of original sin, and it is to be much in the exercise of the spirituality of the Law, which was the only means attained to the conviction of original sin; *Rom.* 7. It is that compendious cut, by which one may behold that holiness of *God* who imposeth a command not only to desist from the actings of sin, but to desist also from the first motions and lusts of sin.

There is this lastly, a Christian would be much in the exercise of prayer, for that spirit who convinceth the world of sin, that what you do not know as of your selves, he who is the great convincer of the world, may imprint those convictions upon your souls, which may make you sit down and bewail your selves, in the bitterness of your spirit. And we shall at this time shut up our discourse, only we would say to these who are entertaining this holy warfare against their corruptions, that they would not be much discouraged, though they see not sensible victory: you most know that sin must be with you while you have a being: we may certainly allude unto that word, *Dan.* 7. 12. and may say that the dominion of your sins shall be taken away, though their lives shall be prolonged for a time and for a season. As likewayes we would say this for your encouragment, who have your corruptions stirring most within you, that ordinarily Satha when he is in the way to remove, then stirreth an acteth most; as it is observed, that the last beatin of the pulse in a dying man is most strong, so th beating of corruption, when it is going to be ca out, may be most violent. And we shall only gi the reason, why Christians are not much affecte with this, that the day is coming when once the shall prevail over their corruptions, and shall trea Satan under their feet; why the feet of those wh bring such glad tyding are not beautiful upon th mountains? And we conceive that it doth eithe proceed from this, that Christians are not serious engaged in this holy warfare, for that is most certain that if you were fighting day by day, then the hop of victory, and of a blessed issue would be as gla tydings from a far country, and should be as col water unto a thirsty soul, that though your hop

were deferred untill your hearts were sick, yet the accomplishment of your desires should be swee: to your souls: or else it doth proceed from this, that Christians do not believe this truth, that there is an issue and period of their fight; If once you could be brought this length to seal this truth, that that victory shall be once heard in heaven, *Speak comfortably to Jerusalem, for her warfare is accomplished*, if we may allude unto these words; or if a Christian be seriously debating with his lusts, and hath also the faith of this truth in some measure, then it doth proceed lastly from this, want of the distinct perswasions of our interest, and want of the assurance of our peace with him; for as long as a Christian is under debate concerning his eternal rest, he cannot be much affected with joy, under the declaration of these means, that there is a period of their fight, and that they who have *been made partakers of the first resurrection, over them the second death shall have no power.* O! what a blessed day suppose ye shall that be, when your feet shall stand within the gate of the new Jerusalem, when you shall receive these two precious badges and eternal trophies of your victory, *a crown put upon your head*, of infinit more value than all material crowns, and *a palm put in your hand.* We conceive, it is impossible to determine, what joy will accrue to a Christian upon the reflect thoughts of this, that he hath trode Satan under his feet, and hath bruised the head of him, who hath so oft bruised his heel: And as for those who are strangers (as the most part of us are) unto this spiritual warfare, be convinced of this, that within threescore and fewer years God shall enter into an eternal warfare with you, where there shall be no cessation of armes, neither shall there be any interruption. It is better to fight with

your lusts, than to fight with *a living and eternal God*, when he shall declare himself to be your opposite and enemy. Man once was made perfect, but he did find out many inventions, and amongst all those inventions he found that accursed one, how there might be a separation betwixt him and the *living God*; and except *He whose name is Prudence*, and hath found out the knowledge of many witty inventions, had found out that precious invention of reconciling sinners unto God, we should have been *Magor Missabib*, terrors to our selves. O! that you might be perswaded once to contend with your lusts, that ye may endure the heat of the day, and the cold of the night, in wrestling against sin; know this, that *sin cannot be cast out by fasting and prayer*; it is so strictly united unto us, it is easier for a camel to passe thorow the eye of a needle, than for many of us to mortifie our corruptions. We shall shut up all that we would say in this one word, be perswaded of this, that the day is approaching and near at hand, when our *blessed Lord Jesus* shall come with ten thousands of his Saints: what if this were the day (O unmortified sinners!) that ye should behold that white Throne fixed in the clouds, and ye should have a summons given into your hands without continuation of dayes, to appear before his Tribunal? What could ye answer when ye are reproved? Would not silence and confession be your best defence? Certainly there is an eternal curse to be pronounced against those who do not exercise themselves unto this precious act of Godlinesse, of *crucifying the flesh, with the lusts and affections thereof*. There is a law of death over your head, and there is a law of sin which is within your hearts, and ye shall be eternally subjects unto these two Laws, except *the Law of the Spirit of life do make you free*.

SERMON

SERMON V.

Gal. 5. 24. *And they that are Christs have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*

THE walk of a Christian, who hath *Christ in him the hope of glory*, is most sublime, and it being from spiritual principles, for spiritual ends, is also according to a spiritual rule. The walk of a Christian is from *faith* and *love in Jesus Christ*, as that predominant principle; nay more, from the spirit of *Christ*, living in the soul of a Christian by faith, and dwelling in it by love, which is that *primum mobile*, and first wheel of all its motions; as likewise, It is for a spiritual end, it being *for the glory of God*, and to subordinate unto this, their own salvation and advantage: they are not like *Ephraim empty vines bringing forth fruit unto themselves*, but it is their design to make *Christ all*, and themselves nothing, though it be natural unto a man to *deifie* himself, and to make himself the first *Alpha* of his actings, and the last *Omega* of all his performances: as likewise, It is according to a spiritual rule, It being conformed unto that precious *word of life*, which is perfect in it self, and leadeth man unto perfection. But this is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation, that we love to take such a liberty to our selves, and such a latitude in our way and walk to heaven. There is much fear and complaint amongst many, for the losse of their civil liberties, and that they are de-

ained captives in their own land by the hand of strangers, but there is a captivity and bondage that is leſſe lamented, and yet more intolerable, and that is the bondage of *ſin and iniquity*, that though we ſhould expire and ſpend ſeventy years (which is one of the utmoſt lines of our life) under this captivity, yet we ſhould not cry forth, *Return our captivity, as the rivers of the ſouth.* Are there not many amongſt us, who ly with as much contentment under the bonds of their ſin, and fetters of their iniquity, as if they were chains of Gold, and ornaments of fine gold? Mortification is a myſtery unto our practice: That which was a paradox to *Saul*, that *a man ſhould find his enemy and yet keep him alive*, that paradox is often commited in theſe dayes, when we do not ſtudy to crucifie the luſts and affections of our hearts. I think, Chriſtians in theſe dayes, when they reflect upon thoſe unmortified corruptions that are within them, muſt be conſtrained to cry forth, that all their hope doth conſiſt in this, *that a living dog is better than a dead lion*, and that their confidence is terminate upon this, that yet they are within this ſide of eternity. We love ſingularity in opinion, but hate ſingularity in practice, though the one, no doubt, is much more commendable than the other. May we not wiſh for two moneths, wherein we may go unto the mountains and bewail our virginity, that we have not been eſpouſed unto that precious and excellent one *Jeſus Chriſt*, and that we have not been endeavouring to conform our ſelves unto his bleſſed and precious Image? We confeſſe this may be a myſtery to many every day, that they are not eternal monuments of the juſtice and indignation of *God*, and that ſomewhat of *Cains* divinity doth not poſſeſſe our hearts, that *whoſoever ſhall find us, ſhall kill us.*

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We would only ſay this, that ye would be as much in the exerciſe of the mortification of your inviſible luſts, as ye are in the exerciſe of the mortification of your viſible luſts and iniquities.

At the laſt occaſion that we ſpoke upon theſe words, we told you that the ſecond thing that was held forth concerning Mortification, was the extent of it, that a Chriſtian ought to mortifie not only original corruption, but alſo his predominant luſts, and the firſt motions and occaſions unto ſin. Concerning the mortification of original ſin, we have ſpoken ſomewhat, and ſhall inſiſt no further: only we would ſay this, that we laid down this as a concluſion, that original ſin could not be mortified in its body, but only was to be mortified in its members, and the ground of this aſſertion we conceived to be this, becauſe it is impoſſible for a Chriſtian to take up original ſin in its body, as is clear from *Jer.* 17.9. where it is ſaid, *that the heart is deceitful above all things, and deſperatly wicked, who can know it?* It is above the reach of any man to fathom and comprehend the deceitfulneſſe of his own heart. It is a myſtery that was never unfolded, and as long as we are within time, cannot be unfolded. We would only ſay this, that a Chriſtian who is convinced of original ſin, that there is the ſpawn and ſeed of every imaginable corruption within him, will be much in the magnifying of redeeming grace, and will ſit down, and pen a ſong of praiſe unto the unſearchable grace of *Chriſt*, who hath redeemed them. I confeſſe, that which makes Chriſtians have ſo much to do with pardoning grace, which was *Davids* practice, 1 *Sam.* 25.32. We may call original ſin *Gad*, for after, it cometh forth a *Troup*, *chorus vitiorum*, a troup of vices; it is that fruitful womb that doth alwayes bear *Trains*

And we conceive, that Christians who are so called, ought to be much in the study of original sin, It is a wonder, that we walk with such woful contentment to heaven, and to that imagined happinesse which we suppose to have: can such a delusion as this overtake you, that you can *reap in joy*, who never did *sow in tears*, and that you can return, bringing *sheaves in your bosome*, who never went forth bearing *precious seed*? we think to climb to heaven by that short ladder of presumption: I would say it, and wishes that you may consider it, we are affraid that there shall be many woful and sad disappointments of many of our hopes, and we shall be constrained to reject our confidence: we separat those things which *God* hath conjoyned, we either pursue for holinesse without justification, or else we pursue for justification without holinesse.

Now in speaking upon the mortification of predominant lusts, which are here called *affections*, because the spirit of a Christian, and of any, are most strongly united unto these, we shall not insist to prove this unto you, that it is the duty of a Christian, or of any, to mortifie their predominant lusts; it is clear from *Matth.* 18. 8, 9. Where we are commanded *to pluck out our right eye, if it offend us*, the meaning of which is this, that if we had a lust as dear to us as our right eye, if it hurt and offend us, we should pluck it out; and from *Mark.* 9. 45. and 47. and from *Col.* 3. 5. where we are commanded to *mortifie our inordinat affections*. Neither shall we insist much upon that distinction of predominant lusts, that there are some predominant lusts, which are more pure and refined, which ordinarily passe under the notion and vail of vertue; as pride, when it is mixed with prudence in its actings, passeth under the vail of generosity, and highnes of spirit and pro-

prodigality when it is not sensual and brutish, passeth under the notion of mortification to the world; and Sathan in tempting people to the acting of these predominant lusts, doth not only study to gain the affections, but likewayes studieth to gain our light and our judgement unto the acting of these things: There are some predominant lusts which are more grosse; the sinfulnes of which is more easily discerned, and Sathan in tempting people to the acting of these lusts, studieth mainly to gain the affection, which in so far gaineth the judgement, as it sets about to devise and meditate upon the way, how such predominant lusts may be effectuat and accomplished. O! but the mind of man will plot subtil iniquity, and the affection and heart will execute the plottings of the minde, with greatest carefulnes and sedulity.

Now that which first we shall speak upon the work of mortification of predominant lusts, shall be this, what are these disadvantages that a Christian hath by not studying to mortifie and crucifie his predominant lusts, but giving way and concession to them to live.

The first disadvantage we conceive to be this, that a Christian who is not much in the mortification of his predominant lusts, doth hinder much of that precious fellowship and divine familiarity which should be betwixt *God* and him; the giving way to the King of our lusts to live, separats friends, and that word is true, *that a brother offended is harder to be won, than the bars of a strong castle*. Now this is clear from *Ezek.* 14. 5. where it is said, *They are estranged from me by their idols*: as likewise, *ver.* 7. of that chapter, *Every one that separateth himself, whether of Israel or of a stranger, and setteth up idols in his heart*, Separation from *God*, and that woful idola-

Idolatry, are two inseparable companions: as likewise, it is clear from *Ezek.* 44. 10. where these are conjoyned again; and *Isa.* 59. 2. *Your iniquities have separated betwixt you and me.* And I would only say this, that a Christian who can to his apprehension, find some sweetness and enjoyment of *God*, without the exercise of mortification, may question much the reality of his enjoyment: And it is certain, that the entertaining of predominant lusts, doth exceedingly interrupt communion and fellowship with *God*, not only because of this, that predominant lusts, when they are in exercise, do exceedingly weaken a Christian in diligence and in his zeal and fervency in going about these duties, by which communion with *God* is attained: Some folks predominant lusts have gotten such advantage over them, that they will almost cease to pray without conviction, or if they be convinced, their convictions will suddenly evanish: but also because of this, that when a predominant lust is in its vigorous exercise, then a Christian loseth much of the impression of the sweetness of communion and fellowship with *Christ*. O! but *Christ* might live long in heaven, ere we give him a visit; we think we could be happy without him, and that is but an imaginary delusion of our lying lusts.

There is this second disadvantage that a Christian hath by not studying to crucify his predominant lusts, and it is this, that such a Christian doth not receive any return of prayer, and God doth deny to him the answer of his desires. This is clear from *Ezek.* 20. 31. where he saith, *Do ye pollute your selves with your Idols, and come and enquire at me? As I live, saith the Lord, I will not be enquired of by you.* And this was the divinity of that blind man, *John* 9. 31. *God heareth not sinners*: And it was the divinity of

of *David*, Ps. 66. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not hear my prayer*: and most clearly, *Isa* 59. 2. where their iniquities doth cause him deny to hear their sutes. O! but there are many Inhibitions served in heaven against the Professors of this generation, that they should pray and not be heard, and should cry and yet not have accesse: And certainly it is no wonder, that such prayers as we present unto God, while our predominant lusts are in exercise, be not heard; we pray to God with such indifferency and formality, as in a manner, we turn over our prayers unto a complement to salute God with in the morning, and to take our farewell of him at night; we know not much more use of many of our prayers, and hence it is that he denyeth to us the answer of them. I would only speak this to you, let Christians hearts first speak the words which they are to speak in prayer and then let their words speak their heart, that their heart may endite that which is the matter of their desires.

There is this third disadvantage that a Christian hath by entertaining his predominant lusts, and it is this, it doth exceedingly interrupt a Christians motion unto heaven: how far have you gone these many dayes, or these many years? the motion of Christians is retrograde in these dayes, they go backward, but do not go on from strength to strength. O! that we might give obedience to that command, which is, *Heb.* 2 4. *Let us lay aside every weight and sin that doth beset us, and run with patience the race that is set before us*; more Mortification would make more motion towards heaven then we do attain to.

There is this fourth disadvantage that a Christian hath by entertaining his predominant lusts, and it is this, that when predominant lust is not mortified, then

then any corruption that is within you, will easily be discovered in the day of trial; the *Lord* oft-times taketh that revenge upon many, that because they would not mortifie at home, he will write their iniquities in legible letters upon their foreheads, that those that run may read them: and if Christians believed this more, that God may be provoked to write your lusts that are not mortified, in capital letters upon your forehead, it might provoke you more to be in this exercise: This is clear, *Ezek.* 16. 36, compard with 37. ver. where their entertaining of their Idols, is threatned with this curse, *that he will discover their nakednesse, and make the shame thereof to appear.*

There is this fifth disadvantage that a Christian hath by it, and it is this; that in the day, when he shall be passing throw the valley of the shadow of death, and shall be looking long and endlesse eternity in the face then a predominant lust unmortified will be ill company, and will raise a storm within the conscience, which will not easily be appeased: There are not many of us fit for eternity, neither do we live as though we were dayly to die. If you would walk with peace thorow the first and second gates of death, study the Mortification of your lusts: O! but a rife singing of that triumphant song, *O death where is thy sting? and O grave where is thy victory?* shall not the soul be fraughted with divine consolation and unspeakable joy?

There is this last disadvantage that waits upon the Christian and it is this, that such a one doth exceedingly marre all, the performances which he goeth about, and (as it were) leaveth a print of his hands upon these most holy and excellent duties. A Christian who hath a predominant lust, and is not studying to mortifie it, his gifts prayes more than his

his grace: as likewayes, he is more In seeking the approbation of men, than the praise of *God*: A Christian that doth not study to mortifie his lusts, he is more in seeking the ornaments of Christianity, then the substance of it: I think, the vitals and essentials of Christianity are much exhausted and spent; and there are some few bones left, rather the picture and anatomy of a Christian, than really such a one; As likewayes there is this, one who doth not study to mortifie his predominant lusts, he will not make conscience of obeying the commandment of faith; And this likewayes waits on him, much hardnes and impenitency of heart. O! but oft-times through the deceitfulnesse of sin, our heart becometh as a stone within us, and we are delivered unto the hands of our iniquities.

Now that which secondly, we shall speak to, upon the Mortification of predominant lusts shall be this, what is that profound subtilty and desperate deceitfulnes that Sathan useth in tempting people to the acting of their predominant lusts: we have six thousand years experience, that he is a lyer, and a murtherer from the beginning, though we believe the flatteries of sin, as though our iniquities were of good report and of known integrity that never did deceive: and we conceive, that Sathans subtilty doth appear in these, first, his subtilty doth appear in this, that ordinarily when a Christian, or any is in a most secure and presumptuous frame, then Sathan acts and tempts a Christian to the acting of his predominant lust, when *Christ* is away, than he doth assail; this is most clearly pointed at, *Luke* 22. 31, compared with 33. vers. where *Christ* saith to *Peter, Sathan hath desired to sift thee as wheat*; and if ye will read the 33. vers. ye will behold *Peters* frame, that he was in a high string of presumption

though

though all men should forsake thee, yet I will not do it: as likewise it is clear from 2 *Sam.* 11. 2. where when *David* was lying upon his bed, and walking upon the roof of his house, then is he tempted to the acting of the sin of uncleanness; Sathan studieth to catch his advantage, especially at that time, when we are most prone to embrace, and most unapt to resist; therefore it should be a Christians endeavour to exercise watchfulnesse, and to stand upon his watch tower.

There is this secondly wherein his subtilty doth appear, that ordinarily he doth propose the imaginary advantage of imbracing of such a lust, and doth affect our affections with the pleasure of it, but doth not make mention of the disadvantage and infinit hurt, that doth appear and come from such a lust: this was clear in his first temptation with our first father, he makes mention of this, *If thou eat of the forbidden fruit, thou shalt be as God*, but no mention made of this, that he should be *a sinner*: and most clearly in *Matth.* 4. 8. where Sathan showeth unto that holy and spotlesse one, *all the Kingdoms of the world, with the glory of them*, and these things he promised to give *Christ*, and shewed him the glory of the kingdoms of the world, but did not shew to him, the vexation and toil of these kingdoms; and no doubt, the one is much more then the other: The hook wherewith he studieth to take us, is varnished over with the bait of imaginary dignity, with transient pleasures, and with passing vanities. O! that we were wise as serpents, to know the depths of Sathan, that we might not be ensnared, nor taken by enticements.

There is this thirdly wherein it appeareth, that ordinarily he studieth either to extenuate the sinfulnesse of sin, that a Christian may be brought to call

call this but a *Zoar*; or else he studieth to prove the consistency betwixt such a sin, and the reality of the grace of God: and when once a Christian is brought to such a length, as to debate the reality of the grace of Gods consistency, with the acting of such a lust, they are near a fall, for then they cry forth, *Master, pardon me when I shall bow my knee in the house of Rimmon, and when my Master leaneth upon my hand*: they then take an indulgence and a latitude to themselves, to commit that iniquity.

There is this fourthly wherein his subtilty doth appear, that oft-times he will restrain the temptations to the acting of your predominant lusts, and withdraw the objects of them, that either you may be put off your watch, or which is more ordinary, that lusts may take life, when the object of lust is withdrawn: And that is most certain, that lust oftimes groweth most when there are fewest temptations to assail it; for upon the absence of our Idols, our love to these things doth increase; a lusting *Amnon* will wax lean every day, when he wants the object whereupon to feed.

There is this fifthly wherein his subtilty doth eminently appear, that ordinarily he will tempt people to the acting of these sins, that are introductive, and bring on the acting of their predominant lusts: he will tempt one that is given to uncleanesse, to pride, idleness, fulnesse of bread: And certainly one who is given to the evil of pride, he will tempt him to the smaller actings of these sins, that so he may ascend by degrees: he will study to seise upon the out-forts of the soul, that so he may gain the affections: he will break the Covenant that we have made with our eyes, that so we may break the Covenant that we have made with our heart.

There is this lastly, wherein his subtilty doth appear-

appear, that ordinarily he will tempt people to the acting of their predominant lust under the vail of vertue, and things commendable; as, he will tempt one to Covetousnes upon this account, that they may be capacitate to be charitable to the poor, and may be useful to these who want in their generation: he will tempt one to sin, as is clear, *Rom.* 3. 6. that the grace of *Christ* may be more conspicuous in pardoning them: he tempted *Christ* to presumption under the vail of faith, as is clear *Matth.* 4. 6. *If thou be the Son of God, cast thy self down*, and the ground he giveth is, *For it is written, He shall give his Angels charge concerning thee, &c.* And likewayes he tempts many to the acting of Misbelief, under the vail of humility, knowledge, and distinct apprehensions of God.

That which thirdly we shall speak to, shall be, to give you some evidences whether or not ye have attained unto the mortification of your predominant lusts, and whether indeed you have sung a song of triumph over them, and having spoken somewhat of this before, we shall not insist much upon it: only we would say these three things, 1. That a Christian that can reflect upon lusts which he supposeth to be mortified with delight, and want of the exercise of grief, may suspect the reality of his mortification. O! but one that can meditate upon his predominant lust which he supposed was mortified, and yet not be constrained to cover himself with ashes, and to put sackcloth upon his loins, may cry forth; *Miserere mei, have pity upon me.*

And there is this second evidence that your predominant lust is not mortified, when you are not sedulous and carefull to eshew all things that lead unto the acting of that predominant sin: If ye be not giving obedience unto that command, 1 *Thes.* 5. 22. *Abstain*

22. *Abstain from all appearance of evil*, you may question the reality of your Mortification. It is an excellent practice of a Christian, to be as much under the impression of the sinfulnes of predominant lust and sin, after it is mortified, and to be as much in pursuing it, as when it is in its vigorous exercise and life with you.

And there is this lastly, which may evidence it, and it is, when one can upon suitable and convenient occasions of acting such a predominant sin, have their lust set on fire, and endeavour to act it, they may question the reality of their Mortification. I know the great bond which restraineth many from the acting of their predominant lust, is not the apprehension of the *holines of God*, but the want of secrecy: O! but if we had secrecy, we would not mourn much for these sins which we commit in secret, neither would we be much in desisting from the acting of these things, unto which our lust doth lead us. It was certainly a commendable practice of one, who being tempted unto the sin of uncleanness, did condescend to satisfie the desire of one that did pursue her, upon this condition, that he would bring her unto a place where nothing should behold her; which he attempting to do, and bringing her to the most retired imaginable place, she then most piously uttered forth these words *doth not God behold us?* which words had influence upon him to whom they were spoken, that he desisted from further prosecuting such woful and carnal designs. O! but the apprehension of the omniscience of God, would keep us much to the crucifying of our most predominant lust.

We shall shut up our discourse at this time, only we shall say a little unto those who are guilty of that predominant lust of *Covetousnes*, which we conceive, is

is not only a predominant luſt, but an univerſal luſt: *Sin* is an univerſal *King* over the moſt abſolute Monarch, and over every one that ſits upon the dunghill. And we conceive that *covetouſneſs* is one of *ſins* greateſt *Princes*, acting under this abſolute Monarch, and having manyeſt ſubjects. And we would only propoſe theſe things, by which you may be helped to mortifie ſuch a luſt and Idol. O! meditate much upon the diſadvantages attending this idol of covetouſneſs; we conceive the diſadvantages thereof are clearly pointed forth, 1 *Tim.* 6. 9, 10. where the Apoſtle *Paul* enumerateth four diſadvantages of that ſin of covetouſneſſe. 1. That it is that which maketh *people erre from the faith*, 2. *It drowneth them in deſtruction and perdition.* 3. *It is the root of all evil.* And laſtly *It pierceth them through with many ſorrowes.* And for thoſe *whoſe god is the world*, we would only propoſe this conſideration to them, which we conceive hath moſt influence upon ſuch, be perſwaded of this, that *covetouſneſſe* will abbreviat and ſhorten your life, as is clear, *Jam.* 5. 3. where this is one property of this *idol of covetouſneſs, that it ſhall eat up your fleſh as it were fire.* It is not an unſenſible cutting ſhort of your life, but moſt ſenſibly it will abbreviat, and bring you in the midſt of your dayes to your long and everlaſting home. And there is this diſadvantage of it alſo, that *covetouſneſs* is that ſin, which doth moſt directly commit a breach of the firſt command, *Thou ſhalt have no other gods before me*, as is clear *Col.* 3. 5 where this ſin of covetouſneſſe is called Idolatry, *and covetouſneſs which is Idolatry.* And certainly, what are thoſe things that you purſue after, but white and yellow duſt and glittering clay? the excellency of which we conceive, doth conſiſt as much (in the eſtimation of men) in the rarity of theſe things, as in any intrinſical and internal

ternal worth and excellency: And how contemptible a thing riches and the world is, doth not this ſpeak it, that when there is abundance of theſe things, they become contemptible? as is clear from that word, that *Solomon made ſilver as ſtones in the ſtreets of Jeruſalem*, which doth not only ſpeak out this, the abundance of theſe things in his dayes, but likewayes it ſpeaketh forth this, that abundance of theſe things maketh them contemptible, and moveth us to undervalue them; And that which *Solomon* hath, *Prov.* 23. 5. *Why ſetteſt thou thy heart on that which is not, for riches take to themſelves wings and flee away*: e're long the world ſhall either leave you, or you ſhall leave the world.

Now we ſhall deſire to ſhut up our diſcourſe with this, that ye would ſeriouſly intend the mortification of your luſts, and that ye would be much in the imployment of the ſpirit of *Chriſt*: *Chriſt* hath killed the damning power of ſin, and hath promiſed to us the Spirit of Mortification, by which we may kill the dominion of ſin: And certainly, a Chriſtian ought to act ſo in dependance upon the Spirit of *Chriſt*, as if they were meer patients and inſtruments under his hand: but with all we conceive, that in reſpect of activity and endeavours, a Chriſtian ought to act ſo, as if he acted independently from him, and did act all himſelf; but withall in reſpect of ſelf-denial, he ought ſo to act, as if he acted nothing at all, but the Spirit acted alone in him, and therefore ſhould cry forth, after he hath done all, that *he is but an unprofitable ſervant*: O! that ye would be perſwaded ſeriouſly to ponder and ballance theſe things, that except ye be the ruine of your iniquities, iniquity ſhall certainly be your ruine, and ye know not how long it is unto that day when that decree ſhall be paſt in heaven againſt you, *they are joyned to*

their

their Idols, let them alone. I shall only say that word which *John* hath in his 1 Epistle. 5. last, *Little children, keep your selves from Idols.*

SERMON VI.

Gal. 5. 24. *And they that are Christs have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*

IT is an unchangeable and unalterable decree of heaven which cannot be repealed, *that the wages of sin is death*, and *that which a man soweth, that shall he also reap*; Though have conceive, there are many that are possessed with this imaginary delusion, *that though they adde drunkennesse to thirst*, and do daily taste of that forbidden fruit, yet at last they shall obtain a place to walk in, amongst those that stand by: They conceive, that there is a possible union of pure Religion and undefiled; and the want of Mortifications, though we think that religion without mortification, is nothing else but the mortification of religion, and *the crucifying of Christ afresh.* Are there not many here, who in stead of *travelling in birth, until Christ be formed in them*, are at traveling in birth, till they bring forth iniquity, and till the Image of that old man be fully framed in them. Now there is this that we would have you know, and wish, that it were engraven upon the fleshly tables of your heart, as with a pen of iron, and the point of a diamond, that there are two Tribunals, upon which *God* doth sit to judge: there is a Tribunal of Justice where all the sentences past,

past, are pure, unmixed wrath, without all temperament or mixture of mercy; And before this Tribunal, all flesh must once appear, and receive that dreadful sentence of eternal separation from the Majesty of the Lord, and, if you do well, you must say *Amen* unto the equity of that sentence: But know this for your consolation, that this is not his last word; know that that Justice Court is but subordinat, and there is another higher, unto which we may appeal, to have that sentence of Justice sweetly repealed. And is not this one mysterious depth of infinite love, that *Grace* should declare them righteous, whom Justice hath condemned, and yet leave no imputation upon the Justice of God? that *love* should sweetly reduce decreers of Justice, and declare them in law to be void and null? this is the law of love. And is not this a mystery of infinit love, that that which is an abomination for man, *to justifie the wicked*, should be love and Justice in God, *to Justifie the ungodly?* And is not this a wonder, that though *there be no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*, yet there should be many things condemnable in them, and that divine love should make such an abstraction, as to make a separation betwixt many things that are condemnable, and condemnation? *Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne*, yet *mercy and truth go before it*, and cometh nearest sinners, to make ready their way, that they may speak with Justice. There is this that we would have you know, that in the accomplishment of this work of mortification, (of which we have been speaking at many occasions) a Christian hath that same power communicable unto him for the overcoming of his temptations, which *Christ* had in the overcoming of principalities and powers: this is clear, *Eph.* 19. 20. And certainly, sometimes when a

Christian

Christian doth reflect upon those living and strong corruptions that are within him, he wil have much of that fear which *Elisha's* servant had, who cryed out, *Master what shall we do?* but if our eyes were opened, we should see that there are more for us, nor against us: put on much of that divine generosity of *Nehemiah* (if we may allude unto it in this combate of faith) *Should such a one as I flee?* however, keep a midst betwixt discouragment, and anxious Misbelief: And I would only give Christians who are indeed ingaged in this holy warfare, that counsel which *Ahab* gave to *Benhadad*, 1 *King.* 20. 11. *Let not him that putteth on his armour, boast as he that putteth it off*, let confident faith be mixed with holy fear, that there may be a sweet mixture of these two. And there is this which we would speak to you, that there is a difference betwixt the grant and gift of pardon, and the intimation of pardon unto a Christian: yea more, there is a difference betwixt the intimation of pardon, even for a sin mortified and repented for, and the divine application of it: this is clear by comparing 2 *Sam.* 12. 13. with *Psal.* 51. where *Nathan* saith to *David*, *thine iniquities are blotted out, and thy sin is taken away.* There is both the grant of pardon, and the intimation of it, and yet he himself, *Psal.* 51, prayeth for the application of pardon; pardon was not applied, though it was intimated: and this would speak this to us, that we would not alwayes conclude from the want of the sensible convictions of pardon, the want of the grant of pardon.

But now to come to that at which we left at the last occasion, which was the extent of Mortification, that a Christian ought not only to mortifie original sin, but his predominant lusts also, with all the motions and occasions unto the acting of these sins.

Con-

Concerning the mortification of original sin, which is here called *the flesh*, we have spoken already, and have spoken somewhat concerning the mortification of predominant lusts and presumptuous sins; It is turned now to be an improper expression, to make mention of a predominant grace that should stand in oppositon to predominant lusts: I would only say this, that under the law, there is no expresse mention made for any sacrifice for presumptuous sins, unto which the *Apostle* doth allude, *Heb.* 10. 26. *If a man sin wilfully after he hath received the knowledge of the truth, their remaineth no more sacrifice for sin.* And certainly this may make us astonished to entertain our predominant sins, and our presumptuous iniquities, to entertain them so, as not to debate and wrestle with them, for they turn not unto presumptuous sins, except we go such a length: therefore we should be much, in presenting that supplication, *Psal.* 19. 13. *Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me.*

Now that which we shall speak to first, shall be this, what are the most effectual and spiritual means, by which a Christian may be helped to the mortifying of his predominant lusts? And before we speak of them, we shall only say this, that this generation desireth rather to know what to do, then to do and practice what they know: we think to win to heaven by knowledge; though we confesse we will not win to heaven without it, yet there is more requisit in a Christian.

The first way how a Christian will be helped to mortifie his predominant lusts, is this, for a Christian to be much in the exercise of secret prayer. And I would say this, he is a blessed Christian who ever won to the mortification of the least strength of lust by publick prayer, whether more publick, or

families, or with ſociety: pride and ſelf-ſeeking, is that Caterpillar and worm that eats up the fruit of theſe addreſſes unto *God*; but if you were much in ſecret prayer alone, it would be a compendious way to attain to the mortification of your luſts, that when a Meſſenger of Sathan buffets you, ye may go to the Throne thriſe and beſeech the *Lord*, that this evil may depart from you, this is clear, not only, *Eph.* 6. 18. where amongſt all the reſt of the ſpiritual armour of a Chriſtian, prayer is made mention of; *Pray with all prayer and manner of ſupplication*: it is clear, *Jam.* 5. 17. *If any man be afflicted, let him pray*: and, 2 *Cor.* 12. 7, 8. the words that we were ſpeaking juſt now. O! whether is that *waſhing of our bed with tears*, and that preſenting of ſupplications *with ſighs and groans that cannot be expreſſed* now gone? There are few Chriſtians, but can make language of their grief, whoſe grief of heart goes never to ſuch a length, as they may cry forth, *I am ſo troubled that I cannot ſpeak*. He were indeed a Phœnix of his time, who could without lying to the *Holy Ghoſt*, ſay, that his bones were waxing old through his roaring all the day; and we would only ſay to ſuch, that are not endeavouring after this, you ſhall go down to your graves, having your bones full of the ſins of your youth.

There is this ſecond mean that we would ſpeak to, That a Chriſtian would be much in the exerciſe of the grace of watchfulneſſe; This is clear from *Luke* 21. near the cloſe, and from *Matth.* 26. 41. *watch and pray, leſt ye enter into temptation.* And certainly, watchfulneſſe is a moſt requiſit peace of armour, that *after we have done all, we may ſtand*; not only becauſe watchfulneſſe is that which diſcovereth unto a Chriſtian his weakneſſe and inability, for a Chriſtian to be convinced of this, it is his ſtrength

ſtrength, as is clear from 2 *Cor.* 12. 10. *When I am weak, then am I ſtrong*: this is a paradox to nature, but no myſtery to grace; but alſo becauſe watchfulneſſe is a moſt effectual mean to diſcover to a Chriſtian, the ſubtilty and profound deceitfulneſſe of his adverſaries, which maketh him to be much in watching over his own heart: watchfulneſſe likewayes is that grace, which diſcovereth unto a Chriſtian, the formal and remiſſe actings of grace in this precious combat: when faith beginneth to die, and hope beginneth to languiſh, and love and zeal beginneth to wax cold, then watchfulneſſe giveth warning to prayer, that it may go to ſeek ſtrength for thoſe that were languiſhing: As likewayes watchfulneſſe is requiſit, becauſe it diſcovereth unto a Chriſtian, the firſt motions of his adverſaries, and when firſt he beginneth to ſtir, which, no doubt, is a great advantage. And more, watchfulneſſe diſcovereth unto a Chriſtian, that advantage which he hath over his luſts, which doth exceedingly encourage him to go on in this ſpiritual warfare.

There is this thirdly, which is requiſit, that a Chriſtian would be much in the meditation upon the ſufferings, death, and love of *Jeſus Chriſt*. I know not (to a tender Chriſtian) a more effectual mean to Mortifie his affections and luſts, then this, this is clear that it is ſo, not only from 2. *Cor.* 5. 14, 15. where *Paul* ſaith, *The love of Chriſt did conſtrain him, becauſe we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, that we ſhould henceforth no more live to our ſelf.* And *Peter* preſſeth this, 1 *Pet.* 1. 18. compared with ver. 20. *Be ye holy as he is holy*; and he ſubjoineth the reaſon of it, *for ye are bought with a price, even with the incorruptible blood of Jeſus Chriſt*: and 1 *Pet.* 4. 1, 2. he preſſeth the doctrine of Mortification from this, that *Chriſt* was crucified in the

flesh: and it is clear from *Psal.* 26. 3. where the great argument which perswaded *David* to pursue after sincerity, was this, *for the love of God is alwayes before my eyes.* And is not this a sweet portraicture, alwayes to contemplat and behold, to look upon love, *untill ye be changed into that same Image from glory to glory.* And certainly *Christs* death and love must have a most effectual influence upon this: Can one read these words, *he swat drops of blood*; and that word, *If it be possible, let this cup depart from me.* Can you read these words and not be provoked to hate sin with a perfect hatred? Can ye love that which crucified *Christ*, and brought him so low? If such a supposition had been possible, that all that were sinners had been standing round about the crosse, in the day that *Christ* was hanged up betwixt heaven and earth, in the day that his precious body was dropping down drops of blood, might not ye have said, O! what a thing must that be which we call sin, that hath brought him so low? And may not the reflect thoughts upon the love of *Christ*, provoke you to this, that if *Christ* hath so far condescended unto you, ought not ye to please him, and give obedience to his Commandments? Who would dispute the commands of such a One? And it is certain, that if we would meditate on these things till we wondered, and wonder till we loved, no doubt, it should perswade you to be endeavouring Mortification of your lusts. *Christs* death hath not only a moral influence (of which we have spoken) but it hath a physical influence also upon the mortification of sin: for *we are bought* (saith the Apostle *Peter*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 20.) *with a price from our vain conversation*: *Christ* hath crucified the damning power of sin, and hath purchased this gift, the Spirit of Sanctification, to crucifie the dominion of sin.

There

There is this fourthly which is requisite, that a Christian under debates with lusts, be much in the exercise of the grace of faith: It is a most insensible and unknown help to our apprehension: we think faith is a help, when all things are desperate. And therefore we judge prayer a more suitable help to sense and apprehension; therefore a Christian under the prevailing of his corruptions, will be more in the imployment of the grace of prayer, than in the imployment of the grace of faith; though we may say this to the advantage of the grace of faith, that it hath a most effectual and most divine influence for the crucifying of lusts: if so we may speak, faith is that that cometh neerest *himself*; for faith, (as it is spoken of it) hath a kind of Omnipotency, as it is said, *all things are possible for those that believe.* Now this is clear not only from 1 *Joh.* 5. 5. *This is our victory, whereby we overcome the world, even our faith*: and it is clear from *Eph.* 6. 16. *Above all things take ye the shield of faith, by which you may quench the fiery darts of the Devil.* And certainly had we so much faith, *as a grain of mustard seed*, we might say to every mountain that is in our way, *be removed, and hurled unto the midst of the sea, and it should obey us.* We shall clear the influence of faith in the mortifying of corruption, not only in this, that the grace of faith, discovereth unto a Christian that super-eminent and precious excellency of Jesus Christ, at the appearance of which, the glory and luster of our Idols do disappear. We think our Idols are like stars, that in the night do appear, and seem beautiful creatures, but when once that *Sun*, even *the Sun of righteousnesse* doth arise, then their glory is not seen, neither can they be beheld. Saw you never such a sight of him, that constrained you to cry forth, *what have I to do any more with Idols?* If such a supposition were

 possible,

possible, that any idol should get entrance above it should get no entertainment there: for they are upheld by an infinit strength that cannot fail: As likewayes, the influence of faith may be cleared in this, that it is that grace, that doth lay hold upon the promises, by which and thorow which, strength from *the head* is conveyed unto the combatant. As for example, when a believer is wrestling with his lusts, faith layeth hold upon the promise of help, and by it, layeth hold on *Jesus Christ*, who is the Promiser. As likewayes the influence of Faith may be cleared in this, Faith is that grace, which discovereth to a Christian, *that crown and recompense of reward*, one sight and view of which maketh love and zeal take fire, and maketh them *to tread upon the high places of the earth*, that when the Archers shoot at them, and do grievously wound them; yet their bow doth abide in its strength.

There is this mean likewayes, by which a Christian would mortifie his predominant lusts, and it is this, that he would be much in entertaining the grace of tenderness, *Joseph*-like to cry forth, when temptation doth assail him, *Shall I do this and sin against God*. I am perswaded that sin not resisted in its motions, doth procure hardness; And likewayes we may say, that sin resisted in its beginnings, doth bring forth the grace of tenderness, in a most effectual and eminent way.

And there is this mean likewayes which is requisit, that a Christian be much in the apprehension of death, judgement, and eternity: these three much meditated upon, would make us affraid to sin. I think a Christian never walketh as he ought, till he walk so, as if each moment next to that wherein he liveth, he had the expectation of appearing before the judgement seat of *Christ*. O! but it would be

be a sad dispensation to many, to have this day a summonds without continuation of dayes, to appear before that dreadful and terrible tribunal of *Jesus Christ*, when the books shall be opened, wherein your wanderings are written, and the books of your consciences shall be opened, that shall say *Amen* to every thing that is recorded within the volume of these books: this is clear from *Act.* 17. 30, 31. *He hath commanded all men every where to repent*, and the argument enforcing it is, because *he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world by this man Jesus Christ*: as likewayes it is clear in *Eccles.* 11. 9. where *Solomon* presseth by way of holy Ironie (for so the scope is) young men not to take their pleasures in the morning of their time, because for all these things *God should bring them to judgement.* And we wish that that *memento*, which did always walk with a holy man, might walk with you, and sound in your ears, *Awake, and come to judgement*, that it may be that which may regulate your walk. I shall not say much, but beware to entertain your lusts, lest judgement overtake you, the stones of the wall of this house shall bear witness against you in the day of the *Lord* that ye have been invited to flee from the wrath to come, and have refused the precious offers of a crucified Saviour. We would obtest and beseech you, that, if there be a heaven, if there be a *God*, if there be an eternity, which are most certain and infallible, if there be a hell, and everlasting separation from the presence of the *Lord*, and if you have precious and immortal souls, that you would tender your own salvation, and speak much of *Peters* divinity, *pity your selves*, for you are destroying your selves through the want of knowledge, and if we may say it, hell is enlarging it self wide for the receiving of many of the inhabitants of this place, and of

many that live in this generation, who are deſtitute and void of the grace of the living *God.*

Now that which ſecondly we ſhall ſpeak to ſhall be this, what are the evidences and tokens of this, when luſt hath dominion over one? And we ſhall ſhortly point out the evidences of luſt, when it hath dominion: And we conceive, this firſt may evidence it, when one wins to ſuch a length, as they can commit ſin with delight, and with greedineſs, when it is pleaſure to them to go after the heart of their deteſtable things, then ſin hath dominion over one: as it is clear, ſin hath dominion over thoſe made mention of, 2 *Pet.* 2. 13. *They account it pleaſure to riot in the day time*, and are ſporting themſelves with their own deceivings; ſuch fools, as *Solomon* ſpeaketh of, *making a mock at ſin*: and likewayes it is clear of thoſe that are made mention of, *Eph.* 4. 19. *They commit iniquity with greedineſſe*, and as the Prophet ſpeaketh in another place, *their hearts are mad upon their Idols.*

There is this ſecondly which may evidence it, and it is this, when one ſinneth with his predominant luſt without conviction, or if they be convinced, their convictions do ſuddenly evaniſh, like thoſe made mention of, *Jer.* 6. 15. *Were they aſhamed, when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all aſhamed, neither could they bluſh*: They had won to ſuch a length in impiety, that not only they would not do it, but they could not do it: and that ſame is made mention of, *Jer.* 8. 12. It is clear likewayes, *Jer.* 3. 3. *Thou hadſt a whores forehead, thou refuſedſt to be aſhamed*; and from *Prov.* 30. 20. Where the adulterous woman ſaith, that *ſhe hath done no wickedneſſe.* When you are brought unto ſuch a length of impiety, then know that you have yielded your ſelves ſervants unto unrighteouſneſs for a time.

There

There is this which may evidence it likewayes, and it is this, when one can commit iniquity upon ſmall temptations, yea, upon none at all: this did prove that that ſin of adultery had ſome dominion over *David*, when he did commit it upon ſo ſmall or no temptation; for this is brought in to aggravat it, 2 *Sam.* 12. 8. *I gave thee thy Maſters wives into thy boſom*: and it is moſt emphatically aggravat, *ver.* 7. one poor man ſhould have had one ewe lamb, and yet he had ſo many, and that yet he ſhould purſue after that: And moſt clearly, *Iſa.* 5. 18. *Wo unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and ſin as it were with a cart-rope*: the meaning of theſe words we conceive it to be this, that they did moſt violently, without any allurement or entiſement, purſue after the heart of their deteſtable things: certainly, thoſe may ſuſpect themſelves, that upon the firſt preſentation of an idol, they preſently bow down their heads and worſhip it.

There is this likewayes which may evidence it, and it is this, when one notwithſtanding of the convictions of the omniſcience of *God* that doth behold them, will commit ſuch an iniquity: no doubt, then ſin is brought unto a moſt damnable and moſt atrocious height; then ſin had dominion over *Er*, Gen. 38. 7. *He did evil in the ſight of the Lord*: the meaning of which word we conceive to be this, that he did the evil, notwithſtanding he was convinced of the omniſcience and all ſeeing eye of *God*: And it is recorded of *Ahab*, 1 King. 21, 20. *He ſold himſelf to commit iniquity in the ſight of the Lord*, when notwithſtanding he knew that he had *ſeven eyes that ran to and fro through the earth*, yet he did act theſe abominations.

And there is this laſtly, that doth evidence it, when one doth ſin with much deliberation and ad-

vice, they are not overhailed by their temptations and lusts, and they sit down in counsel to consult how such a thing may be effectuate: then had iniquity dominion over those that are made mention of, *Mic.* 2. 1. *Wo to them that devise iniquity upon their beds*, that sit down deliberatly in the silent seasons of the night to contrive the mischievous plots of their hearts: and we would only say to such, read the 3, or 4, *ver.* of that chapter, where *God* saith in a sweet and just opposition, in regard of their devising of iniquity; *Behold* (saith he) *I will devise against this people*: God will deliberatly and with much indignation, punish those that sin deliberatly, and it is clear from, *Jer.* 18. 12.

Now we shall shut up our discourse at this time, only we would speak a little unto this, why *God* doth sometimes think fit to expose his own unto some dominion of their lusts? It was a notable and most true saying of a heathen, *As many vices, as many masters*, for every lust is a master; and we may say, every lust hath a servant, and some have ten thousand waiting on. And we conceive when a Christian beginneth to establish his own righteousness, then he is in hazard to be given up for a time unto the dominion of his sin: this is clear, *Ezek.* 33. 13. If he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity; and there may be this reason of it, that they may know to distinguish, betwixt the yoke of *Christ*, and the yoke and bondage of sin, as it is pointed at, *Deut.* 28. 47, 48. And we conceive this may be a reason of it, because *God* intendeth to magnifie the glory of his unsearchable grace, by delivering them from the door of the pit, when this song shall be sung, *This my Son was dead, and is alive, and was lost, and is found*: this is the song of restoring grace, after grace hath once prevented the Christian.

Now

Now we will desire you seriously to intend this precious work of mortification: the most part of us are idol-Christians, we have hands, and we do nothing, we have eyes and we see not, and we have feet and we walk not: And certainly, that practice and maxime of *Matchiavel* is much practised amongst us, he thought it was advantagious to have the possession of religion, and of vertue; but he thought it dangerous to have the reality of religion: there are many that desire to be clothed with the coat of *Christ*, that never desired conformity with *Christ* in the inward man: And we think if *Christ* were to come down from heaven, he might preach this to many of us, *Betrayest thou the son of man with a kisse?* There are many that I am sure have a lower spirit then *Judas*, that would sell *Christ* at a lower rate then thirty peeces of silver: O! eternity, eternity, *what shall you do in the day of desolation, when your visitation shall come from a far? where shall you flee for help? and where shall you leave your glory?* I shall shut up all that I have to say with this, the wrath of that living, but contemptible stone, that was cut out of the Mountains, shall be more intollerable then the weight of mountains and hills. Therefore the reprobats rather choise to be under the weight of hills and mountains, then to be under the weight of this living Cornerstone but so much despised. Will you not imbrace him? may not angels laugh at your folly, and have you in holy derision? the triumph is above, and it is not long before his own shall cry forth, *It is finished*. And no doubt, if we were much in the exercise of faith, we should easily accomplish this warfare: we may call Faith *Eliezer*, of whom it is reported, that he did so pursue his enemies, that the people returned to gather up the spoils. Love, prayer, and joy, will eternally sit

down

down and reap the ſweet fruits of the victory of Faith. Now to him that can make you overcome thorow the blood of the Lamb, and the word of your teſtimony, we deſire to give praiſe.

SERMON VII.

Gal. 5. 24. *And they that are Chriſts have crucified the fleſh with the affections and luſts.*

IT was a divine ſentence of that Maſter of experiences, that *love covereth a multitude of ſins*; we may ſay, that precious and infinit love, that *Chriſt* hath had to ſinners, *hath covered a multitude of ſins*: though this is a lamentation, and ſhall be for a lamentation, that the moſt part of us have not come that length of religion, which the publicans and ſinners did attain to, which is, *to love thoſe that love them.* Doth not *Chriſt* his engraving of his love to ſinners, in letters of blood, call for this at our hand, that we ſhould devote our ſelves wholly to him? But we confeſſe, ſuch is that deſperat enimity and deceitfulneſs of the hearts of all fleſh, that if all who have been partakers of the divine Nature, or ſhall be partakers of it, had but one heart to conduct them to heaven, they would miſguide it in the way, it being the matchleſſe and incommunicable prerogative of the *Captain of our ſalvation* to guide many ſons and daughters to glory. I think, if there were a deſcription to be given of the moſt part of us, we muſt give that which is, *Prov.* 6. 13. He ſpeaketh with his feet, and teacheth with his fingers:

fingers: and the great leſſon that we would teach with our feet, and preach with our hands would be *Iniquity, formality, and diſtance from God.* And I would have you who are expectants of heaven, and have ſome ſmall hope of being eternally with him, to be much in this precious work of mortification. There are ſome ſo habituat to ſin, (if *God* do not prevent them) the laſt act they ſhall commit in this ſtage of the world, ſhall be an act of Iniquity, and they ſhall breath out their laſt, in departing from that *inviſible Majeſty.* There are ſome that though they live ſeventy years, they ſhall not have this to ſay, of one day of all their life, that they have devoted and given it to *God.* Mortification is a myſtery to our knowledge, but much more a myſtery to our practice: It is a wonder that many of us are not diſtracted, and that much of *Cains* divinity doth not poſſeſſe us, that *whoſoever ſhall find us by the way, ſhall kill us.* However, unto thoſe who make any conſcience of this duty, we would ſay theſe two things; 1. Ye may yeeld unto the premiſſes and aſſertions of misbelief, which they draw from the dominion of your ſin over you, but deny the concluſions of misbelief: This was the practice of *David, Pſal.* 65. 3. there is the aſſertion of misbelief in the firſt words, *iniquities prevail over me*, but he denyes that concluſion which we draw from it, *that we are reprobats*; but faith doth ſweetly ſubjoyn, *As for our tranſgreſſions, thou wilt purge them away.* This is bad Logick to deny the concluſion, but precious divinity: And ſecondly, we would ſay this to you, that ye may with a great deal of liberty, make uſe of the dominion of your iniquity, as an argument to plead with *God* for pardon, according to that famous prayer of *David, Pſal.* 25. 11. *For thy names ſake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, for it is*

great. And we would say likewayes, that *God* maketh use of the iniquities of the children of men, as an argument to provoke himself unto mercy, and even those iniquities, which before he hath made use of, as an argument of Justice. It is strange to parallel and compare these two places, *Gen.* 6. 5. with *Gen.* 8. 21. where the reason that *God* giveth of the destruction of the world is this. because that *every imagination of the thoughts of the heart of man, is only evil continually*: and yet, chap. 8. 21. he giveth this as a ground, why he would curse the world no more for mans sake, because, saith he, *the imagination of mans heart is evil from his youth.*

Now we told you at the last occasion we spoke on these words, when we was speaking upon the second thing of Mortification, which was the extent of it, that a Christian should not only mortifie original sin, which is here called *flesh*, but likewayes, he should mortifie his predominant idols, which are here called *affections*; and of these two we have spoken: There is this likewise in the extent of Mortification, that a Christian should mortifie the first motions and tentations unto sin, which are here called *lusts*. And for clearing what we shall speak upon this; we conceive, that the first motions of sin do comprehend these two: first, that a Christian should study to mortifie the first tentations he meets with unto acting, or embracing of any particular lust. And secondly, that a Christian should study to avoid all appearances of evil, by which he may be brought to the acting of that sin. We shall not stand long to prove that it is the duty of a Christian to do the first; it is clear not only from *Jam.* 4. 7. where we are commanded *to resist the devil*, which comprehendeth even the resisting of the first motions of sin, as likewayes from 1 *Pet.* 5. 9 *Whom resist*

resist, stedfast in the faith; but likewayes it is clear from the practice of *David*, *Psal.* 56. 3. where when misbelief began to stir, he put faith in exercise, *What time* (saith he) *I am afraid, I will trust in thee.* And it is clear from the practice of *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 12. 7. where there was a messenger of Sathan given to buffet him, he went and *beseeched the Lord thrise.* Neither shall we stand to prove, that it is the duty of a Christian to flee the appearances of evil,

It is clear, not only from *Deut.* 12. 30. where it is said, thou shalt not *enquire how the Nations serve their gods*: ye may suppose there was no iniquity in this iniquity; yet because it was the appearance of evil, *God* did forbid it: as likewayes from *Deut.* 25. 13, 14. *Thou shalt not have in thy bagg, diverse weights, a great and a small; thou shalt not have in thine house diverse measures, a great and a small*: it might be supposed, that the having of these things when not used, was not unlawful, but the very having of them, because it was an appearance of evil, it was desired to be eshewed: and that remarkable place, *Prov.* 5. 8. *Come not nigh the door of her house, who is a whore*: and that in *Deut.* 12. 3. where the people are commanded, even to forget the names of Idols. And from *Jude* 21. *to hate the garments spotted with the flesh*: and *Deut.* 16. 19. where it is forbidden for *a judge to take a gift*, not that there is iniquity in this, but because it is an appearance of evil, lest he should pervert judgment, it is forbidden.

Now that which first we shall speak to upon this, that a Christian should flee the first motions and appearances of sin, shall be this: to propose some considerations unto you, that may inforce this duty more.

The first consideration that we propose is this, that

that iniquity when it is resisted in its first motions, is most easily conquered and overcome; when sin is killed in its birth, it is killed with the greatest facility and easiness: and certainly, when we delay the mortifying of our lusts, and resists not the devil, It is no wonder that we are led captive by the hand of our iniquities: It was an ancient saying worthy to be practised, resist the beginning of evil, for the remedy is ever more difficult in the close, then in the beginning. However, we would give Christians these two directions for this consideration. 1. After by the power of grace, ye have overcome the first motions of sin, do not give over your watch, nor sit down in carnal confidence, for he will again assail you, even after you have overcome: It is a remarkable word that is annexed to the close of *Christs* temptations, *Luke* 4. 13. where, after Sathan was foiled most remarkably, it is said, *he departed from him for a season*; he had a mind to return, though he was overcome. 2. We say this, that most ordinarily the resisting of the motions of sin, and overcoming of them, if they be not improven with humility, it is the fore-runner of some sad stroak from the hand of the *Lord*.

There is this second consideration that we would propose for inviting of you to resist the first motions of sin, and it is this, a Christian that maketh conscience of this duty, ordinarily he is blessed with most divine and precious enjoyments of *Jesus Christ*: let a Christian try this by experience, and when first sin doth assail them, if they will make conscience to resist it, the dew of heaven shall come down and ly upon their branch. that their glory may be fresh in them, and they shall be constrained to put up an *Eben-ezer* unto *God*, and to cry forth, *hitherto hath the Lord helped us*; this is clear from *Rom.* 8. 13. *If ye through*

through the Spirit shall mortifie the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live; and clear likewise from *Rev.* 2. 17. Where, to the man that is in the way of overcoming, *Christ will give him the hidden Manna:* And certainly, we think, if we may make allusion to these words, that curse is accomplished in these dayes, *I will make the heavens brasse, and the earth iron.* There are some upon whom it hath not rained these three years and six moneths, but are become as the bottle in the smoak, the marrow of whose bones is consumed.

There is this third consideration that we would propose, and it is this, that the resisting of the motions and first stirrings of corruption, is the way to get the soul under a most divine impression of the sinfulnesse of sin: when was it that the Apostle *Paul* cried forth, *O wretched man that I am?* was it not, when there was a law in his minde, wrestling against the law of his members? When he was the greatest wrestler, then did sin appear out of measure sinful unto him. I confess, that distinction which Papists do so much adore, *of venial and mortal sins*, I think Christians in their practice do make much use of. Are there not many sins, which ye account venial, and writeth this name upon their forehead, this is a *zoar*, a little thing, and ye desire to be pardoned, when ye bow your knee in the house of *Rimmon*, if ye go no further: but certainly, the way to bring the soul to a divine loathing of all sin, is to be resisting the first motions of it.

There is this first consideration, that resisting of the first motions of sin, is that which keeps the grace of faith much in exercise, especially in an hour of trial and of temptation. I think, there is nothing that will darken a Christians evidence so much as this, the conviction of this, that there was never a

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ſin did aſſail them, that was reſiſted in its firſt motions and ſtirrings. I confeſs, I think a bad conſcience, is the mother of misbelief, which the *Apoſtle* doth clearly point at, 1. *Tim.* 3. 9. *Holding* (ſaith he) *the myſtery of faith in a pure conſcience*, as if he would have ſaid, that divine and precious gueſt *Faith*, can lodge in no dwelling but a pure and undefiled conſcience: And to make this clear, that the reſiſting of the motions and firſt ſtirrings of ſin, have influence to preſerve faith in exerciſe, ſee *Rev.* 2. 17. *To him that overcometh*, that is in the way of overcoming, *I will give him a new name*; he ſhall know that his name is written in theſe precious records of heaven, and that before the morning ſtars did ſing for joy, e're ever the corner ſtone of the world was laid, he was engraven upon the heart of precious ones, in indelible letters which cannot be blotted out: As alſo it is clear from, *Rom.* 7. compared with 8. and 1. *verſe*: when was it that *Paul* cried forth, *There is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus?* was it not then, when he was wreſtling againſt corruptions?

And there is this laſt conſideration, which we ſhall propoſe to enforce this duty, and it is this, that not reſiſting ſin in its firſt motions, doth ordinarily creat and bring to paſſe much hardneſſe and ſtupidity of heart, when we ſilence our convictions with lazineſs, and anſwer our reprover with this, *I have put off my coat, how ſhall I put it on?* I ſhall ſay to ſuch, it is a bad omen and ſign that God is upon his way to ceaſe to be ſuch are prover unto you: I confeſſe, there is a difference betwixt ſinning againſt light, and ſinning with light; and we conceive that there are many guilty of the one, that are not guilty of the other: However, if once ye ſhall come this length, as when temptation doth aſſail you, to make

a covenant of peace and agreement with it, ye may expect, if you go to heaven, you ſhall be ſafe, but ſo as by fire: and we confeſſe there are ſome whoſe conſciences may bear them record, that they never knew what it was to reſiſt the firſt motions and ſtirrings of corruption. It is a leſſon of ſo high nature, that it would need explication unto them: & think ye that ye can attain unto that living and precious hope, who never knew to wreſtle with ſin, and with your corruptions? is ſuch a deluſion as this amongſt you, that ye can reign, though ye fight not, and triumph though ye contend not? ye may reign to your own apprehenſion as kings without *Chriſt* this way, but ſhall never reign as kings with him, if ye do not ſtudy to mortify your luſts.

That which ſecondly we ſhal ſpeak upon this, ſhal be this, what is the reaſon that Chriſtians do not reſiſt ſin in its firſt motions and ſtirrings within them? And we conceive, that it doth either proceed from this, that Chriſtians are not much in the exerciſe of the grace of watchfulneſs. I think temptations ſeiſes oft-times upon a Chriſtians affections before they be a war, hence it is, that when the Apoſtle *Peter* is preſcribing this direction of reſiſting the motions of ſin, he requireth this as an antecedent duty, that they ſhould be watchful, 1 *Pet.* 5. 8, 9. *Be vigilant*, and then, *reſiſt him, ſtedfaſt in the faith*: when once a Chriſtian hath given over his watch, he is a prey unto his luſts: we may certainly ſay of him, that he is a city broken down and without walls, that doth not exerciſe the grace of watchfulneſs. Or elſe it doth proceed from this, that Chriſtians are not in a divine and ſpiritual frame to reſiſt temptations, when they are firſt aſſailed with them. We confeſſe, our ſpirits oft-times are ſo loadened with the pleaſure of a world, and are ſo much taken up with

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the passing delights of a transient world, that when temptations do come; we do easily condescend to imbrace them: hence it is that the Apostle *James* when he is passing this exhortation upon these to whom he writeth, *resist the Devil*, he subjoyneth this in the 9. *vers.* as a concomitant duty, *draw near to God*, as if he would have said, If temptations find you at a distance with *God*, then ye may cry forth, *have pity on me*; for ye are a prey, if ye be not found within sight of him, and if your hearts do not study to walk in the sight of his precious face. As likewayes *Peter* doth prescribe this, 1 *Pet.* 5. 8, 9. *Be sober*, and then, *resist him stedfast in the faith*: and more clearly it is pointed at, *Matth.* 26. 41. *Watch, and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.* And I would only say this unto you, it is a most high and divine walk alwayes to be living within sight of *God*, that when ye go down to the grave, ye may have this to say, I am now to change my place, but not to change my company; heaven may be to you but a precious passing and transition unto a more constant and immediat enjoyment of *God*: Or else it doth proceed from this, that Christians when they are first assailed with the motions and stirrings of corruptions, they dow not do violence to their own flesh. I confesse these two Idols, which are dependant one upon another, that idol of *Self*, and that idol of *Ease*, they are the cut-throats of a Christians diligence, and are the great occasion, why we do not overcome, *through the word of our testimony, and by the blood of the Lamb*: Think ye that it is an easie thing to overcome temptations? I confesse, those that are not acquainted with it, may probably say it, but this is certain, that such kind goeth not forth, but by fasting and prayer. It cost *Christ* much toil to liberat you from the guilt of sin, and it will cost you much toil to

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liberat your selves from the filth of sin. And there is this lastly from which it proceeds, that Christians do not mortifie sin, in its first stirrings and motions, because they are not living under an impression of the sinfulness of sin. We conceive, that oft-times when temptations do assail us, we think, *departing from God* a dispensible evil, and that which easily we may obtain pardon for: I would prescribe that unto you, as one of the greatest mysteries of Christianity, and blessed, blessed is he eternally that hath win to it, and it is this, to be living constantly under a divine impression of the sinfulness of sin, that ye may take it up, in its nature, and in its effects. I think, if one should come from the dead, having the chains of everlasting wrath, wreathed about his feet, and the shekles of the fury of the *Lord*, wreathed about his hands, and should preach to you, concerning the nature of sin, and how damnable a thing it is, there are many who would not take heed much to such doctrine.

Now that which thirdly we proposed to speak to from these words was, the difficulty to attain to Mortification, which we conceive, was held forth under that word *Crucify*; which doth import, that Mortification is a longsome work, as crucifying was a longsome death: as likewayes it doth import, that Mortification was a painful work, as crucifying was one of the most painful deaths: And likewayes it holds forth the intensive nature of Mortification, that a Christian should study not to be content until he did kill corruption: And concerning these three we shall speak together: And we shall point out the difficulty of attaining to Mortification in these things. Is there not this which points out the difficulty of it, that there is a woful unity of affection betwixt us and our lusts, they are dear to us as the

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right eye, and our right hand, and right foot: And I confesse, to convince you of that unity that is betwixt you and your lusts, I think that expression which ordinarily ye use, when one is reproving you for your passion, or for your swearing, may suffice; ye will answer, what aileth you at me? which doth speak this, that you say, your lusts and you are one. And I confesse *Paul* hath an expression like this, *Rom.* 7. 8. *I know* (saith he) *that in me dwelleth no good thing*. There are two *me's* in a Christian; there is a spiritual and a refined *Me*, there is a carnal and a wicked *Me*, as *Paul* doth distinguish them in that verse, *I know* (saith he) *that in me dwelleth no good thing*: and yet he subjoyneth, *In me to will that is present*, which is one good thing. And we confesse that word is accomplished in *Me*, *They are joyned to their idols, let them alone.*

There is that secondly which pointeth out the difficulty of Mortification, and it is the strength o those lusts that are within us, we think the Scripture is so abundant in pointing out the strength of sin that we need not speak much to it: there is that expression, *Rom.* 8. 2. which is a most strange word, i is there called *the law of sin and of death*: as it were sin pleads for as much subjection from us, as if we were tyed by law to obey it: And in that verse there is a sweet contrariety of laws, *the law of the spirit of life, hath made me free from the law of sin and of death.* If so we may speak, there is, in a manner one decree and statute of heaven declaring another to be null; for it was a law in heaven, that we should be under death, because we were under sin: but behold, here is a posterior law that doth sweetly reduce this prior law, and it is, *the law of the Spirit o life.* As likewayes, that expression pointeth forth the strength of corruption, which is a *Cor.* 10. 4

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where he saith, we are to fight for *the pulling down of strong holds*, as it were, sin fortifieth it self within our bosome: and we confesse, if this were believed, we should study to mortify our corruptions with a great deal of more pains and constancy. There is this likewayes, which pointeth it out, and it is, the deceitfulnesse of our lusts, and the subtilty which they vent in their deceiving of us; which is clear from that expression, *Jam.* 1. 14. *When a man* (saith he) *is drawn away, and entised of his lusts*: the word there that is rendered *entised*, is taken from the fishers, who deceive the silly fishes, with an apparent bait of pleasure. We confesse, these two are the great obstructions of a Christians progress to heaven, there are temptations of fear, and there are temptations from advantage: which two, if they were removed, we might with greater facility overcome our lusts, and sing a song of triumph over our idols: oft-times that expression is recorded *deceitfulnes of sin*: we confesse, if this were believed, we would use a more divine and holy prudence, least we should be ensnared. And to shut up our discourse upon Mortification upon which we have been speaking so long; we shall only speak a little to obviat any mistake that may be about the difficulty of any Mortification, which shall include that which we intended to speak upon; which was the certainty of overcoming.

And that which first we would say unto you is this; Be perswaded of this, that there is more divine satisfaction in the resisting of your lusts, and wrestling against them, then there is in the actual fruition of them all: that word of *Solomons*, *Stollen waters are sweet*, saith the adulterous woman, but at last they shall be convinced of the contrary: and that word which he speaketh, *Bread of deceit is pleasant*

to the mouth, but he knoweth not, that the dead are there, &c. And we think the *Apostle* sweetly chydeth the Romans concerning this thing, *what fruit have you of those things, whereof you are now ashamed?* It is sad to think upon that woful disappointment that many shall meet with.

There is this which we would likewayes say, that there is a divine certainty of a Christians overcoming, let the difficulties be never so many, and (O beloved in the Lord) are not these glad tidings from a far country, and may be as cold water to a thristy mans soul, that a Christian shall once overcome: And I confesse there are these four things, that speak the certainty of a Christians overcoming: 1. The faithfulnesse, and the love of *Jesus Christ* is laid in pawn for our overcoming, which is clear from that *Joh.* 6. 39. *And this is the fathers will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should losse nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day*: And we confesse, this is certain, it is more of *Christs* concernment that a believer should overcome, then it is of his own. O! what songs to the faithfulnesse of *Christ*, what songs to his love shall be sung that day, when the precious troup of his Saints, shall return from the day of judgement, and that generall infare shall be of all those that have been begotten unto a lively hope, when they shall convey *Christ* home, through the ports of the *new Jerusalem*, every one having a harp of God in his hand, and shall cry forth, *Halelujah, Halelujah to him that sitteth upon the Throne, and to the lamb for ever and ever*: that song shall have no period, though it have a beginning.

There is this likewayes which pointeth forth their certainty of overcoming, *Christ* hath overcome, and therefore a Christian shall overcome. It was the

the sweet divinity of the Apostle *Paul Heb.* 2. 9, 10. there is a promise (saith he) that all things shall be put under our feet, but we see not that promise accomplished, saith he: I see one thing accomplished, which is a pledge of it, I see *Jesus Christ, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and with Majesty*: *Christ* is in heaven, and he must be there; and that word *John* 16. last, *Be of good cheer*, saith he, *for I have overcome the world*; which is a pledge and certain token, that ye shall once overcome.

There is this likewayes which points forth their certainty of overcoming, that that same power which was exercised in bringing *Christ* from death, and in making him to overcome principalities and powers, is communicate to believers to make them overcome; as it is clear from *Eph.* 1. 19, 20. where it is said, *That power that wrought mightily in Christ to raise him from the dead, doth also work in those that believe.* O! Christians, heirs of the grace of life, believe this, that Omnipotency is ingaged on your behalf; and have you not learned that first point of the Creed, that *there is nothing impossible to God*; and so when you are constrained sometimes to cry out, *Who shall stand before the children of Anak*: Content your selves with this, that there is nothing too hard for him.

And there is this lastly, which points it out, that divine and invisible knot of union that is betwixt *Christ* and his members: Is *Christ* above? the members must follow: for ye know, though *Christ* be the fulness of the Saints, yet the Saints are the fulness of *Christ*: there is a sweet mutual fulfilling and accomplishing each one of another: know ye not that word, *that where I am, there they may be also*: think of all the words that *Christ* ever spoke to the Father, that word was the most imperious and commanding

manding like word which he hath, *Joh.* 17. 24. *I will* (saith he) *that those that thou hast given me, be where I am.* It was not his prayer which came that length, he willed it, and would not be contradicted: And certainly there is nothing that may comfort you in the hour of trial so much as this, *Christ* is upon his way to relieve you, and ye are upon your way of overcoming: And I shall only say that word, which ought to be your practice, 1 *Joh.* 5. 18. *Whosoever is born of God sinneth not, and that wicked one toucheth him not:* That ordinary expression which you have, you should not rub cloths with him, nor touch him. And to those that are walking in the broad paths of sin, I shall only speak that to you which is, *Job* 21. 22. *His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty.* Your eyes and your taste shall be satisfied; and that word which is vers. 30. *he shall be preserved to the day of destruction,* or as the word in the original, *he shall be reserved to the day of wrath:* as it were, there shall be a combination of wrath, and justice that shall seise upon you, Now to him who is upon his way, who shall come and will not tarry, and whose reward is with him, we desire to give praise.

SERMON

SERMON VIII.

Gal. 6. 14. *By whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*

CHristianity doth consist in a blessed exchange of affections, a soul dying in its affections and respects to all things, that are here below; and living and advancing in its desires toward him, who is that blessed and universal good. It ought to be that arch-plot, and great design, that Christians ought to promove, to attain to that original unity, which once was in mans affections towards *God.* O! what blessedness did *Adam* enjoy, while he did stand in that estate wherein he was created, he having a blessed harmony of all his affections toward *God,* and likewayes there being a most divine correspondence and blessed familiarity betwixt heaven and earth, betwixt him who sitteth on the Throne, and the foot-stool: but that was most eminently verified, that *man being in honour, did not abide.* O! what anxious and perplexing thoughts had poor *Adam,* no doubt, some hours after his fall, when he did reflect upon that which was once his condition, and did compare it with that which was now his lot, might not he take up that lamentation over himself, *Man in his best estate is altogether vanity;* And likewayes he might have that proverb taken up of himself, *How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning?* Now, man by losing that blessed

unity that was in his affections, hath contracted a woful and infinit diversity in his affections towards these things that are here below: so that those affections which did once sweetly run in one channel toward *God*, are now divided and separated in many channels, toward those things that are below him: And there is nothing beneath the *Son*, that leadeth captive so many of our desires as the *world*: therefore it were your advantage to be crucified to the world, and to have the world crucified to you: that you may discover, that endlesse vanity, and unspeakable vexation of spirit, that is in all things that are here: The world is a perfect compend and compleat epitome of all misery: *God* himself is that compend of all blessednesse, so that there is nothing that we can take up under this, but it is most eminently in him. It is a duty which is much undervalued in these dayes, Christians to be promoving in that blessed work of having themselves crucified to the world, and having the world crucified to them: O! how suitable is it for those who are heirs and expectants of that blessed hope & everlasting enjoyment of being with *God*, who is the Judge of all flesh, and with *Jesus Christ*, who is the Mediator of the New Covenant, and with the innumerable company of holy Angels, and to be made heirs and co-heirs with *Jesus Christ*. Is it not below you to be much taken up in your vain and anxious pursuits after those things that are here below: The objects of the desires of your immortal spirits ought to be more high than things below, and ought to be more divine than things humane; your affections ought to *be ascending as pillars of smoak*, and ye should be breathing after that blessed day when there shall be a confinement of all your affections on him. We have at some occasions spoken unto you, of the grace of humility,

ty, and of the grace of love, the one teaching us to undervalue our self, the other teaching us to value *God*: And had you been much taken up in the spiritual and living exercise of those, there should not have been much difficulty to perswade you at this time. We shall not insist long in telling what Mortification is; It is a constant and blessed endeavour of the Christian, to remove out of his way all those impediments, that do interrupt the exercise of love; As likewayes, it is that which entertaineth a constant and perpetual antipathy and holy indignation against every thing, thorow which his conformity with *God*, and that perfect likeness and similitude with his Maker, might be in any way impaired. Mortification doth not consist in those unconstant and unequal exercises of mortifying our lusts, it consists not in those violent flashes of holy zeal and indignation against our iniquities; for though that indignation be violent for its time, yet it doth quickly evanish and pass away: but that grace of Mortification must be a constant and dayly exercise; We will solace our selves in the chambers of our imagry, by beholding our idols pourtrayed up the wall, we will study to receive satisfaction in our apprehensions, when we cannot receive satisfaction in the actual fruition of them: Such is likewayes the woful desperatness of the hearts of the children of men, that when *God* hath put a worm to the root of that gourd, under the shadow of which, we used to solace our selves, we cry forth from a discontented humor, *It is better for us to die then to live*: O! there are many here, to whom it would be death to out-live their idols; their idols and they are pleasant in their lives, & they desire not to be divided in their deaths.

3. Mortification doth not consist in that partial and divided way of mortifying our corruptions, we

taking vengeance upon ſome of our luſts, but with *Saul*, ſpareing it who is the *King*. *Naaman the Syrian* muſt have an indulgence of bowing his knee in the houſe of *Rimmon*: *Lot* muſt plead for the ſparing of *Zoar*, that ſmall thing: and ſo when we are intending that work of Mortification, we plead for the ſpearing of theſe things, which we call *Zoars*, theſe ſmall, but our Maſter-corruptions. Certainly that evangelick Mortification which is required of us, doth not conſiſt in this, for we muſt intend an univerſal ſeparation betwixt us and all our idols, we muſt caſt away all our idols to the moles and to the batts, and *we moſt defile the covering of them, and he alone muſt be the cover of our eyes:* He never knew what the grace of Mortification meant, who never ſet about the accompliſhment of the ruine of that great and maſter-idol which domineereth over him: And we conceive, that the beſt and moſt ſolid way of knowing our growth in Mortification, is by reflecting upon the decay of theſe idols, which are our predominants; other ſins which aſſail us may decay, and their ſtrength wax weak, and yet mortification not be on the growing hand, for there are many of our luſts, that rather die by conceſſion, then by conſtraint; there are many of our idols that rather go out of us, then are caſt out.

Now the firſt thing that a Chriſtian ought to endeavour to mortifie is, his love to the world, which was the practice of this holy man: In the words he pointeth out unto us that way, wherein he did attain this compleat and ſpiritual Mortification to the world, holden forth to us in theſe words, *by whom*, which doth relate unto *Jeſus Chriſt*, who is made mention of in the words going before: or, as the words may be rendered, *by which I am crucified to the world*, and ſo they relate unto the croſs of *Jeſus*

Jeſus Chriſt. Now under this notion of *being crucified*, he doth certainly hold forth unto us, that great difficulty that is in accompliſhing the work of Mortification; And under this name of *being crucified*, he holdeth forth unto us, the longſomneſſe of the time that we muſt ſpend, before we can attain compleat Mortification, *Cruciſying* being one of the moſt lent and ſlow of all violent deaths; Mortification is not a work of one day, it will coſt us many dayes and years, before we ſhall cruſh the head of him, who hath ſo oft-times cruſhed our heel, before that bleſſed promiſe ſhall be fulfilled, that *all things ſhall be put in ſubjection unto us*: Sin doth moſt eaſily invade us, and take poſſeſſion of us, but it is not eaſily diſpoſſeſſed; for except we had the infinit ſtrength of him who is *Jehovah*, we might ſit down, and cloſe our hands, and never mint to oppoſe theſe Idols, under whoſe ſubjection we are: This word of *being crucified*, doth likwayes hold forth the painfulneſs and uneaſineſs of this work of Mortification, *Crucifying* being a death, amongſt all violent deaths, one of the moſt bitter: we muſt certainly be mortified to our eaſe, before we can be mortified to our luſts, we muſt travel in birth, before the grace of Mortification can be formed in us. It is a woſull evil in theſe dayes, that the moſt part of people walk under this apprehenſion, that there is not much difficulty to Mortifie their corruptions, but it is a token, that they never knew what it was to mortifie them, who never knew the difficulty of Mortification.

The third thing that is holden forth under this name of *being crucified* is, that woful reluctancy and indiſpoſition of ſpirit, which we have to this bleſſed exerciſe of Mortifying our corruptions; we have as great unwillingneſſe unto it, as though we were

to go to subject our selves to some violent death. O! how is vanity and corruption joyned to the spirits of the sons of men: how loth are we to have that wofull and accursed union betwixt us and our lusts dissolved? O! how many Orators and Procurators within our selves have we to plead for this, *the sparing of our lusts*: we may be perswaded of this, that if we be not the ruine of our iniquity, iniquity shall certainly be our ruine. O! how may we blush and be confounded seven dayes, that we should be so loth to have a separation betwixt us and these things, by which our distance with *God* and estrangement from him, is so much increased: this vanity is unspeakable, that we should be so averse from that wherein our eternal blessedness doth ly, in having that wofull band, which we have wreathed about our own necks, taken off by the blessed and everlasting hands of him who hath died and risen again, to accompliſh this blessed design.

Lastly, under this word of *being crucified*, is held forth unto us that compleat and spiritual Mortification to the world, that this holy man attained to, he was as one dead to these things: he was not much exercised in joy in having the world, neither was he exercised in grief, by wanting the things of the world, he was a man dead, which could not be moved by any of these things: We do not say so, that *Paul* was altogether a Stoick, without all passions of grief and sorrow, or of joy, but we only say this, that he did not grieve for the want of the world, as those who have no hope; neither did he so joy in having the world, as those who have not a more divine and high spring of consolation, he was cloathed with a holy indifferency, and a blessed neutrality in having or wanting these things; it was none of *Pauls* desires to have the world, he had learned that divine

divine and excellent art of being content with every estate of life; he knew not what it was to murmur; And it were certainly much our advantage, to be provoked to jealousie, when we reflect upon the practice of this holy man. I conceive, that if all that are here would examine themselves, by how many degrees their Mortification to the world, doth come short of this, they might sit down and conclude with themselves, that they are yet to begin to mortifie; yea, there are many here, to whom we may say, that they are so far from being clothed with a holy indifferency in having the things of the world, that they are clothed with that wofull and indispensible necessity in pursuing after these things: this is the is the language of the most part, *Give, give*, men hurrying themselves in multitudes of hopes, and of fears, and of expectations, and likewayes an infinit number of desires; And what is the end and result of all these things, but *vanity and vexation of spirit*.

Now that you may be helped to attain this concerning-duty, to be mortified to the world, we shal propose these things unto you: The first is this, be much taken up in a holy contemplation and spiritual beholding of these unsearchable excellencies that are in *God*. If once the soul of the creature were elevated to behold him, there should not be much difficulty, to be mortified to the world: were we once admitted to draw by a lap of the vail, and behold that uncreated glory and unexpressible Majesty that is treasured up in him, Mortification should be no great difficulty unto us: this is clearly held forth here, for *Paul* doth tell by whom he had this grace of Mortification, it was by beholding *that pleasant plant of renown Jesus Christ*. This is clear likewayes, 1 *Joh.* 5. 5. *Who is he that overcometh the*

world,

world, but he that believeth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? Did we once believe that fundamental Article of faith, that he who was crucified upon the tree, was the real *Son of God*, we should most easily win to this concerning duty of Mortification. We may reduce all the causes of our little growth in this blessed work, to that woful ignorance *of God*, wherewith the most part of us are clothed: were there a door opened to us in heaven, and were we in the spirit to behold him who sits upon the Throne, whose countenance is like a Sardine stone, and about whose Throne there is that rain-bow; could we penetrat thorow these vails, wherewith both he and we are covered, we being cloathed with the vail of our ignorance, and likewayes with the vail of our impurity; and he being cloathed with these two most glorious vails, the vail of his unsearchableness, and the vail of that wonderful and unexpressible Majesty that is in him, the one confounding the judgement, and the other confounding the affections, so that affection and judgment in a manner is put to a none exercise, and both of these do sweetly resolve in that blessed one act of admiration. We need not speak much to the commendation of those unto you, who were never acquainted with him, that so ye might be perswaded to forsake your old lovers; We shall only say this, silence and admiration they speak least, and yet speak most: there is more divine Oratory in holy silence, and more exellent expressions in blessed admiration, than all our inventions could reach: what can man speak of him who is that unsearchable and incomprehensible Majesty? This may appear a paradox to you, that silence should speak; and admiration commend: but it is no paradox, when the object of our commendation, is by infinit degrees exalted

exalted above our blessing and our practice. O! men of the world, will you once be perswaded to make that blessed divorce betwixt you and your idols, that there may be an everlasting conjunction betwixt *God* and you: O! if ye had so much divine understanding, as to judge of things according to their real worth, *He alone should be exalted in that day*: Come and see and behold what infinit sweetnesse is treasured up in him, those springs wherewith ye delight your selves shall ere long dry up; but *he* is that high and infinit spring, which alwayes floweth out, and yet is not impaired.

The second thing whereby we may attain to this blessed duty of Mortification to the world, is this, by reflecting how passing and transient those things are, wherewith the sons of men use to solace themselves. *Paul* doth presse Mortification to the world from this consideration, 1 *Cor.* 7. 31. *The fashion of this world passeth away*: the word is most emphatick, this *Schema* and representation of the world, or this stage-play of the world, it passeth away; therefore, *let those that rejoice be as though they rejoyced not, and be careful for nothing*: this is clear, 1 *Joh.* 2. 17. and 1 *Pet.* 4. 7. did we solidly believe how changable those enjoyments of the world were, would we hurry our selves so much in our pursuits after them? Those who are lifted up in their enjoyments this day, may be thrust down low the next day: *Job*, who was a man enriched in many things, yet a few dayes, yea, we may say, a few hours made a sad and strange exchange: We may affirm that, with great assurance of truth, *Surely man at his best estate is altogether vanity*: that word that is there (*at his best estate*) may be rendered thus, *although he stand*: *Etiamsi constitutus*, in your most fixed and settled condition in the world: this is the Emblem and

Motto

Motto of your ſtate *vanity*, moſt ſubject to change: and why ſhould you weary your ſelves in the fire for that which is very vanity?

The third thing by which ye may attain this duty of Mortification, is to be much taken up in the conſideration of the brevity of your life: I ſuppoſe, that if we were walking more in the houſe of mourning, and were believing that truth, *that it is appointed for man once to die*, and that ſhortly, we muſt be brought home unto that unchangeable eſtate of life; O! how would this ally us in our purſuits? I think this were a little water, which we might mix with our wine, when their is greateſt confidence of Creature-contentments: leſt the foam of this wine ſhould diſtemper our head, we may mix it with this water, *the brevity of our life*. It is a ſweet ſubject for meditation when we are moſt high, to be much in the conſideration of this, that within a few dayes we ſhall be moſt low. What is your life but a vapour, which doth quickly evaniſh, and doth but appear for a little? Suppoſe the whole Creation ſhould ſtay with you during all your time, yet how ſhort ſhould your enjoyment be? what is mans life, but a handbreadth, theſe four finger-breadths, which is one of the leaſt of all geometrical meaſures; there is morning, forenoon, afternoon, and night, all which do amount to a day? there is infancy, youth, manhood, and old age, and thoſe do quickly evaniſh and paſſe away. How many are hurried into eternity, in the firſt ſtep of their dayes, in their infancy? And again, how many in their youth? and we have frequent experience, that many in their manhood, and in the flour of their age, that ſentence cometh forth, *Return ye children of men*: and there is not one amongſt an hundred, that do attain to that utmoſt period that nature doth allow; and what though

though ye did live fourſcore of years, which is the utmoſt period that nature hath allowed, yet doth your time quickly evaniſh and flee away? Why ſhould you ſolace your ſelves with thoſe things that cannot eternally remain with you? when ye go down to the grave, you can take nothing of theſe things with you: for in all points as you came, ſo ſhall ye go and what profite is there that ye have laboured for the wind?

The fourth thing whereby we may be helped to attain this, is this, Be much in the mortifying of thoſe corruptions which cannot be entertained, but by intertaining alſo this woful corruption of covetouſneſſe: there are ſome corruptions, which have ſo near affinity to, as likewayes dependance upon, this ſin, that if theſe be not cruſhed, we cannot attain to this duty of Mortification, there is *prodigality and pride*, theſe two grand enemies, to the accompliſhment of this bleſſed deſign: and we would begin to cruſh theſe, before we can begin to accompliſh this.

There is another way which is this, be much taken up in the reflecting upon that bleſſed hope, and that grace which ſhall be brought unto you at the revelation of *Jeſus Chriſt*. *Peter* preſſeth ſobriety to all things here below, by this argument, 1 *Pet.* 1.13. *Be ſober*, and he giveth this reaſon of it, *for the grace that ſhall be brought unto you at the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt*: O! were we much taken up in beholding that bleſſed eſtate of life, which the ſouls of juſt men made perfect ſhall have with *God*, where we ſhall enjoy, and yet not loath: there ſhall be an everlaſting conjunction betwixt deſire and enjoyment of him who is the perſon beloved, ſo that it thinks never to receive ſatisfaction; all it doth receive, is more to provoke its appetite, then to ſatisfie its deſire,

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There is a laſt, which is this, be much in the conſideration of that day, when all the families of the earth ſhall appear before him *in the valley of deciſion.* This indeed would help us, to much mortification to theſe things of the world, as is clear from *Eccleſ.* 11. 9. had we the faith of that day engraven upon our ſpirits, that we muſt render an account of our wayes, O! how wary ſhould we be in ingaging with vanity? I think the great cauſe why ſin hath ſo univerſal a dominion over the ſons of men is, becauſe we do not ſolidly believe that there is ſuch a day approaching, when we ſhall appear before the judgement ſeat of him, who ſhall judge not after the ſeeing of the eye, nor ſhall reprove after the hearing of the ear, but ſhal judge righteous judgement: The terror of the Lord would certainly perſwade us, if we did believe this. O! what a holy unwillingneſſe ſhould we have in walking after the paths of our Idols.

Now we ſhall ſhut up our diſcourſe with this, be perſwaded once to begin that work of mortification, and eſpecially in mortifying your love to the world: he that returneth victor after war with his idols, we may call him *Joſeph*, for he ſhall be as a *fruitful bough whoſe branches run over the wall.* If once you ſpoil that grand and arch-rebel, who doth ſo much oppoſe you, in a manner, you ſhould ſtand alone and ſing a triumph, they ſhould flee when none purſueth; *and we ought be ſtrong as a lyon, and who ſhould rouſe us up?*

OF

Of Spiritual CONTENTMENT.

SERMON IX.

Phil. 4. 11. *I have learned in whatſoever ſtate I am, therewith to be content.*

IT was *Adams* ignorance of this divine myſtery of Chriſtianity, *to be content with every eſtate, wherein he was placed*, that did bring him down from that high pinacle of his excellency, and did degrade him from that primitive glory, wherewith he was cloathed, for he not being content with that precious and excellent lot, wherein *God* had placed him, but coveting after a more noble and excellent Beeing, he came exceedingly ſhort of this deſign. And ſuch is the Athenian and woful frame of ſpirit wherewith men are poſſeſſed, that they can fancy no bleſſedneſs in what they are, but imagine a great bleſſedneſſe to be in what they are not; hence is it that men do covet the lot of others, and are diſſatisfied with their own eſtate and condition: and certainly the affections of men while they are living under theſe ſphears which are in perpetual motion, can never be ſatisfied, nor be

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at reſt: which was the obſervation of that maſter of experiences, *Prov.* 27. 20. *Hell and deſtruction are never full, ſo the eyes of man are never ſatisfied*; and as he ſaith, *Eccleſ.* 1. 8. *The eye is not ſatisfied with ſeeing, nor the ear filled with hearing*: And we may likewayes adde, that the heart is not ſatisfied with the enjoying; And it is certainly thorow the deceitfulneſs of the ſpirit of man, and that inviſible root of pride, that every lot and condition of life is ſubject to ſatiety and loathing: private men do envy the greatneſſe of Princes, and Princes do envy the quiet repoſe of privete man, though they will not deſcend nor reduce themſelves unto that eſtate, but do alwayes fear that, which ſometimes they are conſtrained to deſire: And believe me, a Chriſtians ſitting down ſeriouſly, to contemplat and view what an infinit multitude of hopes, fears and deſires the ſpirit of man is poſſeſſed with; as likewayes to behold how that *varity and vexation of ſpirit*, is engraven upon the choiſeſt lot that a Chriſtian can meet with here, he may be provoked to look out at the windows of his priſon-houſe, and long for that precious day, when *Chriſt ſhould be as a roe, or as a young hinde coming over the mountains of Bether*, waiting to be exalted to that precious & excellent eſtate of life, where there ſhall be neither loathing nor longing: *Abel* who hath been the firſt poſſeſſor of heaven of all the houſe and family of *Adam*, and hath dwelt in it near ſix thouſand years, yet there is not in him the leaſt inclination or motion to change or alter his eſtate; there is no loathing in heaven nor deſire to flit there; And, believe me, this divine myſtery of contentment with every lot and condition, in which a Chriſtian is placed, is not, eaſily attained. O! what repinings hath the unmortified ſpirit of man to the diſpenſations of *God*, in regulating

ing his lot and eſtate, which doth alone ſpeak forth the *Atheiſme* of our heart: for it is, as it were, man propoſing a model, and form unto *God*, how he ſhould rule and govern the world. I think Chriſtians are as much ſubject to the faſhion of this contempt and pride as any. It was a noble ſaying of one, in the commendation of victory over a mans ſelf, *Tunc omnia regna tenebis, cum poteris rexiſſe tui*, ye ſhall then be made a poſſeſſor of all kingdoms, when ye ſhall be made a ruler and king of your ſelf. And no doubt, one that is once mortified to this paſſion of diſcontent, he may dwell upon the Mountains of *Ararat* in the midſt of all the revolutions, and changes that are here below; ſuch a Chriſtian may ſweetly contemplat the overturning of Eſtates and Common-wealths, and may patiently endure every lot that doth befall him, and poſſeſſe his ſoul in patience: And certainiy, if men knew but this one thing, that the whole circumference of the earth, is but one point of the Univerſe, and that all time that hath been, is, or ſhall be, is but one inſtant, in compariſon of eternity: and what is man but a part of that point? and what is his life but a ſmall part of that inſtant? And why then ſhould man anxiouſly complain, to ſpend a part of a moment in enduring the moſt anxious and ſad things that can befall him? And, (as *Chriſt* doth moſt divinely ſpeak) *Can a man by taking thought, adde one cubit to his ſtature?* what poor advantage hath a man by his diſcontentment and ſorrow, if it be not to render himſelf more miſerable? we may ſay of heavenly-mindedneſſ and of contententment, they are like *Hippocrates* Twins, that live and die together, they are two ſweet companions, that alwayes go along together, and cannot be divided.

But to deſcend a little more to the words, you

have *Paul* in them obviating any misconstruction that the *Philippans* might have of his joy, which he expresseth in the former *verse*, as if he had been one that was coveting great things for himself, or desiring to be great in the world, no, saith he, *I speak not these things because of want*, which formerly I had, and is now made up, for, saith he, *I have learned in every estate that I am, therewith to be content*. There is no lot, saith *Paul*, but I can patiently endure it, and can with a divine complacency carry my self under it; And this he proveth in the 12. *verse*, *I know* saith he, *how to be debased*, I am instructed in this divine art, how to walk soberly under debasement, and I *know*, saith he, *how to abound*: I am not one that is puft up with a prosperous lot in the world: And least this assertion of *Pauls* should seem to be a boasting beyond his line, and of being exalted above measure, he doth sweetly subjoyn that humble assertion, *I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me*; As if he would have said, do not mistake me, or conceive me under a more divine and high notion then ye ought, for I am but a poor and sinful man, who can do nothing of my self, but as I am over-acted by a divine and supreame hand. I am enabled to triumph over the most adverse and sinistrous lot, that can befal me.

The words which we have read, in the original they are most significant and emphatick; that word which is here rendered *Content*, *is All sufficient*, and so the words may sweetly run thus, *I have learned in every estate wherein I am, to be all-sufficient*, of which that word, *Pro.* 14. 14. *Is* a sweet commentary, *The back slider in heart shall be filled with the fruit of his own way, but a godly man shall be satisfied from himself.* In a manner, there is a well-spring of everlasting consolation within the Christian, which maketh

maketh him endure every anxious lot. And no doubt, that word *I have learned*, doth both speak the difficulty of attaining this mystery of divine contentment, as likewayes it speaketh out that ignorance of this divine and noble end, wherewith *Paul* was once possessed: I was once, saith he, as rude as any in the knowledge of this thing, but now through the understanding and wisdom of *God*, I am made perfect in the knowledge of these things. And that word *in every estate*, doth exceedingly commend that great pitch of Christianity, unto which *Paul* had attained, there was no lot that could befal him wrong; And we shall only say this by the way, continuance of affliction is one of the greatest occasions of impatience that is imaginable. A Christian, when first he meets with a cross, may be provoked to salute it, and embrace it but if it be lengthened out upon him, then he cryeth forth, *hast thou found me, O thou mine enemy?* and then beginneth to call in question the loving kindness of the *Lord*, and to complain, *that he hath shut up his mercies in everlasting forgetfulnesse*; though we may say, in the day that a Christian shall be passing *thorow the valley of the shadow of death*, he shall be sweetly convinced of his impatiency, when a Christian shall be constrained, to engrave that Motto upon the door of his everlasting rest *he hath done all things well.* What thoughts will ye have of these risings and debatings of spirit wherewith ye have been possessed? We may imagine and not without some ground, that a great part of eternity shall be spent in interrogations, *Christ* shall interrogate us, if we laked any thing while we were here below, and we shall be constrained to answer, *nothing*, even in that day when he sent us forth without scrip, or money, or without sandals or any thing, and those that did belong to us,

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we ſhall be conſtrained, to ſubſcribe to the *infinite wiſdom of God*, in regulating of our lot.

Now in ſpeaking upon this divine quality and duty of divine contentment, (which we conceive is a duty moſt requiſit in theſe dayes) we ſhall not inſiſt long in pointing out what this divine grace of contentment is, but we conceive, it includeth not only this, a ſweet and compoſed frame of ſpirit, under every anxious lot and diſpenſation with which we meet, of which that word is a commentary, *Lev.* 10. 3 where it is ſaid of *Aaron*, when his ſons were cut off, *He held his peace*, and that word, *Pſal.* 62. 1. *Truly my ſoul waiteth upon the Lord*: But the words in the original are this, *Truly my ſoul be thou ſilent unto God*, as they are rendered in the margine of the book, as if he would have ſaid, do not fret nor be diſquieted, becauſe of any thing that he carveth out unto thee.

But likewayes this grace and duty of contentment includeth, a holy complacency, and ſweet ſerenity and calmneſs of ſpirit under every lot, of which that word is a commentary, *Jam.* 1. 2. *Count it all joy when you fall into diverſe temptations*, and that word, *Rom.* 5. 3. *We glory in tribulation.* Neither ſhall we dwell long upon this, to prove that it is the duty of a Chriſtian to be content with every eſtate wherein God ſhall put him. This is clear, 1 *Tim.* 6. 8. *Having food and raiment let us therewith be content*: and *Heb.* 13. 5. *Be content with theſe things that you have*; and *Jam.* 4. 7. and *Luk.* 3. 14. And we may ſay, if a Chriſtian made the world but his ſervant, little would content him, but if once he make the world his maſter, and lord of his affections, then his deſires will be infinit, and cannot at all be ſatiſfied. We ſhall not long ſtand to inveigh againſt that too much addictedneſs of man to thoſe paſſing and tranſient

ſient vanities of the world: we conceive there are theſe three things, which men do moſt earneſtly covet, there is pleaſure, riches, and honour; And certainly, theſe are below an immortal ſpirit, to fix their deſires upon them: would ye have *Solomons* verdict of riches, O ye that truſt in uncertain riches, ye have it ſweetly in, *Prov.* 23. 5. *Wilt thou ſet thine eyes upon that which is not?* In a manner, riches they have not a beeing, for *they take wing to themſelves and they flee away*, as *Solomon* doth moſt ſweetly ſpeak, *Eccleſ.* 5. 11. *If riches increaſe, what profit* (ſaith he) *is there to the owner thereof, ſave to be beholder of them with their eyes*: all that the owner of riches hath is, the ſeeing of them, which a man, who is a paſſer by may likewayes have, though he be not a poſſeſſor of them. And hence is that word, *Luk.* 14. where the man deſiring to be excuſed for not coming to Chriſt, ſaith of himſelf, *I have bought a piece of ground and muſt needs go ſee it*; all his enjoyment of it was comprehended in that one poor thing, *to behold it*; And as for honour and glory, which, ſpirits that are more refined, and are not ſo wedded to the things of a world, purſue after, I would only have them knowing that one word, *Pſal.* 62. 9. *Men of high degree are a lie, and men of low degree are vanity*: as if he would have ſaid, any preheminency that one hath, that hath an excellent lot in the world above a poor one, doth conſiſt in this, the one is a vanity, and the other is a lying vanity, ſpeaking ſomewhat to be in him, which is not really in him; and that word, *Act.* 25. 23. where, ſpeaking of *Bernice*, that came in with great pomp and glory unto the Senat-houſe, the word that is there rendered *pomp and glory* is this, he came in with a great fantaſie Μετα πολλης φαντασιας, with a great ſhow and image, without any thing in reality: And

as for pleasures of the world, with which these epicurean spirits of the world are so much besotted, know that verdict of *Solomon*, which he hath of these things *Vanity of vanities, and all things are vanity and vexation of spirit*, And what can the man do that cometh after the king? If *Solomon* found no more, no doubt, none that cometh after him, can find any more.

But that which we shall speak to first upon this, shall be, what are the causes and principles from whence the discontentment of one doth flow, under any anxious or sad lot that doth befal him? And we conceive that it either doth proceed from this, a Christian not being much in the exercise of self-examination, as it is clear from that word, *Psal.* 4. 4. *Examine your selves upon your bed and be still*, speaking so much, that the compendious way unto submission and contentment under any lot, is to be much in self-examination: And certainly self-examination hath much influence upon contentment under every lot, because such a one doth most accuratly take up these imperfections and blemishes that are in him so in stead of complaining, he is constrained to wonder and cry forth, *why should a living man complain*, a man for the punishment of his sin: likewayes one that is much in self-examination, is a man that can take up the intendment of the rod, as likewayes the advantage of it, and so he is constrained patiently to bear the rod, in his youth, and to sit down and adore the unsearchable wisdom of God in dispensing such things to him. That word, *Prov.* 19. 3 Is oft times verified of us, *the heart of man perverteth his way*, and then he fretteth against the *Lord*, when he is chastened for it. O! but if a Christian were dwelling much at home, he might wonder that yet he hath a beeing in the world, & is not cut off from the right

right hand of the *Lord*, O! bless him eternally that ye are not sent away to be reserved in everlasting chains.

There is this likewayes that doth occasion discontentment under our lot, and it is, want of that divine preparation to meet with every lot that can befal us before it come. We think a Christian ought to be general in his resolutions, to bear every cross that *Christ* will carve out. And certainly, there are these two advantages that a Christian hath of general and universal resolutions. First, he hath this advantage, that when he is chastened, as it were, in his goods or any other thing that belongeth to him, he beginneth to sing a song of praise, because it is not worse with him: there can no lot befal a man who is universal in his resolutions, but he will have a song of praise unto God, because of it. Secondly, he hath this advantage, that foresight and resolution to meet with any cross doth exceedingly dispose the Christian for meeting with it: we conceive that word which is *Job.* 3. 25. hath had great influence on *Jobs* patience, *for the thing which I greatly feared, is come upon me*: afflictions do oft-times surprize us, and so we faint in the day of adversity, and so prove our strength to be but small.

There is this likewayes which occasioneth our discontentment, and it is this, that little heavenly mindedness, that is in a Christian, when he meeteth with his rod: O! but a Christian sitting down upon mount *Pisgah*, to behold that promised land, might with patience bear his rod: this is clear, 2 *Cor.* 4. 16. compared with *vers.* 17. where *Paul* giveth this reason of his courage and constancy under his rod, that he had an eye unto those things that were eternal: did ye never know what such a thing meant, as to drown the thoughts of your present misery, in

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these precious depths of eternity, to be beholding so much in heaven, as might infinitly solace, yea, and make up all your losses here. I confess that opinion of the Stoicks, that did commend apathie and want of passions unto men, that they should not be much moved with grief for the want of any thing, nor be moved with joy for the having or possessing of any thing, is in some sense good: hence was it that in some sense they spoke divinely, *nihil boni vel mali accidit homini, nisi bonus vel malus animus*; that there was no evil nor good that did befal man, but only a good and evil minde: If the heart was in a divine and spiritual frame, they knew not what any other sad or anxious lot could do to them.

There is this likewayes which occasioneth discontentment, and it is this, the want of the taking up *God* as the cause and author of those sad evils which befal us; which if it were once believed, we should be ashamed to dispute and murmur so much as we do: this is clear, 1 *Sam.* 3. near the close, that word of *Elies*, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good*: and that word, *Psal.* 39. 9. *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth*, and this reason is given of it, *because thou didst it*: and that word, *Isa.* 39. 8. *Good is the word of the Lord.* And certainly the murmurings and repinings of our hearts, do speak that grosse Atheism that dwelleth within us: O! durst we debate with him who is *Almighty*, or put him to render an accompt of his ways, who is that *supream and absolute One*? Is it fit to be said to such a *Prince* as he is, thou art ungodly, and to condemn him who is most just? O! be much in the study of the soveraignty of *God*, when he, as it were, doth call as in a solemn assembly, all your terrors round about.

There is this likewayes which doth occasion it, which is our little being in the meditation and serious

serious thoughts of the brevity of our life and of time: If a man knew that it were but for an hour, or for ten days that he were to endure tribulation, he might patiently submit, and bear with his rod: this is clear, 1 *Cor.* 7. 29. compared with the following verses, where, from that doctrine that time was short, he doth infer this exhortation, *let those that weep, be as though they weeped not*, as if he would have said, let them not be much moved with those things, time will have a close: Believe me, it is not long before the smal period of time that hath interveened betwixt eternity before, and eternity after, shall be sweetly swallowed up, and there shall be nothing but eternity.

And there is this lastly which doth occasion our great discontentment, under our rod, which is, that unmortifiedness and subduedness of spirit: pride being the great predominant evil, and if we may allude to that word, *Only by pride cometh contention*; we may certainly say it holdeth well here, that only by pride are these contendings that we have with *God*, concerning his dispensations towards us. In sum, it is this, it is impossible for a Christian not humble, to be content: pride is one of the greatest opposites unto divine contentment under any rod that we meet with: O! but if a Christian were humble, he might sit in the dust, & sweetly adore the infinit love and patience of *God*.

Now we shall in the second place propose some considerations, that may hinder a Christian, or any other, from being discontent with any lot that doth befal them; and the first is this, that there are many sad and wofull companions of a Christians discontentment and repyning against any dispensation of *God*, and we conceive there is not only this bad companion, that a Christian hereby is indisposed and unfitted to go about spiritual duties, especially these two, of *prayer* and *praise*: It is impossible for a Christian that is under the exercise of discontentment, to pray or praise; there is some

what of this pointed at, 1 *Tim.* 2.8. where this is a qualification of a right prayer, that he should be without wrath, not having any murmurings or repynings within his heart: as likewayes it is clear concerning praise *Psal.* 57. 7. *My heart is fixed, it is fixed*, which speaketh so much as this, that praise doth require a divine and composed frame of spirit: and it is most certain, that discontentment doth impede prayer, for there are three sweet ingredients of the exercise of prayer, which discontentment doth exceedingly cut off; there is love, fervency, and faith; which no doubt discontentment doth abridge; a discontented Christian cannot be a Christian burning with love; jealousie is such a predominant with him, that love cannot be his exercise: And certainly, if prayer do not proceed from the precious principle of love, it wants that one arme which it ought to have: Neither can a Christian exercise faith, because he hath now, as it were, taken up so bad an opinion of *God*, that he cannot repose his confidence nor hope in him: And as for fervency, they are so much in porring upon their present lot, that they can as it were, be fervent about nothing, but only in the removal of that. It is certain, that let a Christian examine himself, there is nothing that cuts the neck of prayer so much as discontent; in a manner, the spirit as it were, is turned brutish, being uncomposed for any spiritual converse with *God*.

There is this bad companion likewayes, which accompanieth discontentment, we are incapacitat, and rendered altogether unable to resist temptations while discontentment is in exercise. It is impossible for a Christian to be a Mortifier, or resister of lust, when discontentment is once in exercise; And there are these two evils, that get most marvelous advantage under discontentment, and these are, the predominant lust of such a one, be what it will, and pride, these two evils do spring apace: And certainly, all other lust

do get much victory over such a one: a Christian may losse more by one hours discontentment under a crosse, then he can regain in many Months, yea on this side of eternity: And it is no wonder that temptations do prevail upon such a one, he is off his watch, and his strength is gone: In a manner, temptation speaketh that, *Their strength is gone from them, let us go up and put them to flight.*

There is this bad companion likewayes, that doth accompany discontentment, want of tenderness of spirit, and the losse of it. It is most certain, that there is nothing that doth cut off tenderness, so much as discontentment: for a Christian that is such, is not living under the impression of the fear, or of the love of the Almighty, which are the two great principles of tenderness of spirit. Certainly, let one examine they will find, that by their anxiety and bitterness of spirit, they have made their hearts to die as a stone within them, and have made their bands strong upon their spirits.

And there is this last bad companion of discontentment, A Christians undervaluing of all the former mercies which he hath received, when once a Christian meeteth with that which contradicteth his humor, he loseth his esteem of every thing that formerly hath been bestowed upon him: There is something of this pointed at, *Gen.* 37. last, in *Jacobs* impatiency of the losse of *Joseph*; where he doth undervalue all his mercies beside; And it is most clear in that word, *Esth.* 5. 12, 13. where, though it be spoken of a wicked man, yet by proportion it holdeth of a Christian, that because *Mordecai* did not bow his knee, he cried forth, concerning all his other mercies, *they avail me nothing*; he knew not what it was to put a price upon mercies that he had received; but because this which was the great lust of his heart was away, he did undervalue the rest: And it is most certain, the

there is nothing doth so heighten a Christians disrespect unto the most precious and excellent things of *God*, as this of discontent: And this is one subtilty and device of Sathan, that a Christian may with greater ease, and with lesse conviction do it: They do ordinarily construct their choisest mercies, to be delusions, and so upon that account begin to undervalue and misprize them.

There is this consideration which may move you to wrestle against discontentment, It is a character and distinguishing mark of a Christian from a Reprobat: I would have Murmurers seriously to meditate upon that sad word, which is in *Jude.* 19. vers. compared with the 15. where speaking of Christs coming to judge and execute vengeance, the first put in the roll are these, *These are Murmurers and complainers*: and that word 1 *Cor.* 10. 10. *Be not murmurers, as many of them were, and were destroyed by the destroyer*: And certainly, it is no wonder that Murmuring passe under so bad a notion, not only because it is indeed that sin, which speaketh out our Atheisme most, but because it is that sin which doth declare most a Christian or any others desire to be independent, and not in subjection unto *God*, In a manner, such is the wosul ambition of our spirit, that we desire not to depend upon him, but that we should have our own lot in our own hand, to carve out unto our selves. O! we know not what it is to give Christ a negative vote in the dispensations that do befal us: we love to be co-ordinat with *God*, and not subordinat to him, O put a blank in his hand, desire him to fill it up with what he liketh: Christ doth oft-times put a blank in a Christians hand, as in that word, *What will ye that I should do unto you*, there is *Christs* blank, that he doth give us, and though thorow our ignorance we cannot fill it up, it is best to give it back to himself, that he may fill it up, with what he listeth.

There

There is this consideration also, that may perswade you to desist from discontentment; It is that sin which doth interrupt the accomplishment of the promises. As likewayes it doth interrupt the exercise of faith upon the promises; this is clear, *Num.* 14. 27. compared with 28. where that promise that was given to them of entering into the land of *Canaan*, they were cut short of it, because of their murmuring: and it doth interrupt the exercise of faith upon the promises, as is clear, *Psal.* 106. 24. compared with *vers.* 25. where it is said, *they believed not his word*, and the ground of it is given, *for they were murmurers*: And it is no wonder that murmuring interrupt the exercise of faith upon the promises; for it is impossible for a murmurer either to have the faith of the omnipotency of *God*, or to have the faith of his goodness or love, which are these two precious pillars of faith upon which it must build it self: O! but these that begin once to debate with him, do quickly put faith out of exercise. And I would have you knowing this, That there is a discontentment of judgement, and a discontentment of the will and affections; and oft-times a Christian will win over the discontentment of judgment and reason, when he cannot mortifie the discontentment of his will and affections; for the soveraignty of *God*; and the sinfulness of our nature, will silence our reason; but, no doubt, it must be his own immediat hand, that must silence the murmurings of our will: this is clear, *Psal.* 42. 5. where *David* is convinced of the unreasonableness of his discontent, and yet he is forced to debate with his will concerning the quieting of it.

There is this consideration likewayes, which may provoke you to desist from discontentment under your lot; It is a most unreasonable evil for a Christian to be discontent: for as *Christ* speaketh *Math.* 6. 27. What profit have you by taking thought? Can you add one cubit to your stature? It is a poor thing, when a man hath

hath loſt his goods, to loſſe his patience alſo: what a poor revenge is that which a man taketh of himſelf? And certainly, the unreaſonableneſs of impatience under the rod, doth not only appear in this, that it hindereth and interrupteth a Chriſtians ſeeing of any mercy that is in the rod, it is impoſſible for a diſcontented one to take up mercy in his ſtroak: but alſo that impatience is the compendious way, for the prolonging of your ſtrait; and the involving of you in greater miſeries and thraldoms: As likewayes, impatience doth heighten and increaſe the cauſe of your bondage, and multiplieth your iniquities: O! but it is a ſweet and excellent ſtudy for a Chriſtian, to endeavour patience under every lot? And, in a manner, when we cannot read love in his hand, nor in his face, becauſe of his frowns and ſtroaks, yet by faith to draw aſide the vail, and read love in his heart, and cry forth, *I know the thoughts of his heart, that they are thoughts of peace, and not of evil:* certainly it is through diſcontentment, that we cry forth, *Though his words be as ſoft as oil and butter, yet war is in his heart;* we do change him with contradictions, betwixt his profeſſion and his purpoſes.

And there is this conſideration likewayes, which may deter you from diſcontentment, which is this, It is impoſſible for a Chriſtian to profite by his rod, while he is diſcontent: all the time that a Chriſtian is under the fit of impatience, he ſpendeth ſo much of his time moſt prodigally: not imploying it, not promoving that which is the great deſign of the rod, *to take away Sin*, but ſtudying to involve himſelf in greater captivity and bondage, and to ſubject himſelf under the hand of his iniquities. O! that ye might be perſwaded to exerciſe more divine contentment under your lot, and that ye may be more exerciſed in contemplating and beholding thoſe precious and excellent things that are above. That is a moſt remarkable word which *Jacob* had to *Eſau*, *Gen.* 33. 11. *I have enough*: the word in the original

nal is this, *I have all*: And as Criticks do obſerve, that word which *Eſau* had in the 8. verſe; *I have enough*, is not that which *Jacob* hath in the 11. verſ, *I have enough*; that though *Jacob* was a poorer man then *Eſau*, yet *he had all*: Such a Chriſtian as hath *Chriſt* for his portion, may ſweetly ſing, though I be poor, yet do I poſſeſſe all things, *as having nothing, and yet poſſeſſing all things, as ſorrowing, yet alwayes rejoycing*, as poor and yet behold we are rich. It is not long before that day ſhall come, *when Chriſt ſhall make up his Jewels*; when there ſhall be a clear and moſt lpable difference made betwixt the precious and the vile: Behold he is upon his way, and therefore do not murmur nor repine: A Chriſtian muſt not expect two heavens, it is enough, if he poſſeſſe one, we muſt not travel to heaven thorow a bed of roſes, it is not much though we go to heaven in a fiery chariot, having afflictions and calamity our companions all alongs the way: when our feet ſhall be paſſing thorow the threſhold of the door of our everlaſting reſt, then our chains ſhall fall from our hands, and our ſetters from our feet, then might we lift up our heads with joy and rejoyce. O! but when thoſe heavens which you behold ſhall be rolled up as a ſcroll, when thoſe two great vails, the viſible vail of the heavens, and the inviſible vail of iniquity ſhall be rent from the top to the bottom, and we ſhal have moſt clear and precious diſcoveries *of that noble plant of renown*, when we ſhall ſit down at the well head and drink, and forget our miſery, and remember our poverty no more: let hope evaniſh unto fruition, and faith unto poſſeſſion, and let time ſweetly evaniſh unto eternity.

SERMON X.

Phil. 4. 11. *I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*

IT is an ordinary and usual error and delusion among Christians, that they place the exercise of religion in these duties that are more sublime and high unto their apprehension, as faith, hope, and prayer, but undervalue the exercise of those lower duties as contentment, mortification to the world, and charity to the poor, as not being so essentially necessary for the being of a Christian. I am perswaded, that if any of you had been a hearer of the Apostle *James*, when he was discoursing upon that divine subject, wherein pure Religion and undefiled did consist, no doubt, ye would have imagined, that he would have brought forth some divine and profound thing, in the exercise of which, pure Religion before *God and the Father*, did consist: but believe me, Religion doth more consist in practice, then in speculation, and more in obedience, then in refined notions: What conceive ye of such a definition of pure Religion and undefiled, as that which is *Jam.* 1. 27. *Pure religion and undefiled* doth consist in mortification to the world, and in charity to the poor, those two low undervalued duties. And this may further ingratiate and commend the exercise of these low and undervalued duties, that in the day when *Christ* shall appear to judge the quick and the dead, the ground of the approbation of the Saints shall be grounded upon this low & contemptible duty, *charity to the poor*, and shall be that ground which is given of eternal blessedness, which approbation of *Jesus* Christ, no doubt is a confirmation of *James* his doctrine: & that

that which shall be the ground of the reprobation of the wicked, shall be the neglect of this low duty, *want of charity to the poor, and visiting of the fatherless*: And believe me, in the exercise of this divine quality of Christian-contentment, not a little of religion doth consist: *Paul* saith, *Godliness with contentment is great gain.* It is by faith, that a Christian enjoyeth *God*, it is by love that he enjoyeth his neighbour, and by contentment that he enjoyeth himself. We confess it is a most mysterious and difficult lesson for a Christian in each lot he is placed in, to be crying forth, *It is good for me to be hear, let me make a tabernacle here.* Ordinarily we have strong desires to have the carving out of our own lot. *Solomon* maketh mention *of three things, that are not satisfied, and of four things that never say it is enough, the grave, the barren womb, the earth that is not filled with water and the fire.* And we may adde unto these four, this one fifth, the most part of men who are unsatisfied in their lot: It is no wonder that men unlimited in their desires, meet with great disappointments, for those that have exorbitant and excentrick desires must have great hopes, as likewayes great disappointments: Therefore it were certainly your advantage, to be studying to compendize & abridge your desires after these things that are here below: for as one spoke well, he conceived that the greatest riches of a man did consist in poverty of desires, and in being content with that lot, wherein *God* had placed him. There are one of these three things that befal a Christian, under which there is great difficulty for him to attain to contentment: there is the losse of his predominant lust and idol, especially if it be any whit refined and vailed under the vail and vizard of any vertue, as if one be given unto the seeking of the applause of the world there is nothing under which there is so great a difficulty to exercise contentment, as in the losing of that applause, our hearts oft-times crying forth, *they have taken away*

my gods, and what have I more? And certainly, oft-times our lusts die unto us, before we die unto them, which is the occasion that our living lusts, do sit down and lament over the graves of our buried idols, and wisheth that they may awake and stand up from the dead. And we shall only say to such, *wo to you, when all men shall speak well of you,* which may hinder people from pursuing after that idol, but much more especially that word, *Joh.* 5. 44. *How can ye believe, that seek glory one of another*; which words seem to import an inconsistency betwixt the exercise of faith, and betwixt the exercise of pursuit after idols.

There is this likewayes that befalleth a Christian, under which it is a great difficulty for him to attain to contentment, and that is the continuance and lengthening forth of any affliction that doth befal him; Oft-times a Christian, when first he meeteth with his crosse, will salute and imbrace it, and will cry forth, *this is a grief, and I must bear it*: but when the threed of our affliction is spun out unto any length, then we begin to be discontent and to cry forth, *hast thou found me, O thou mine enemy?* This was clear in the exercise of *Job*, who when first he met with his crosse, did express divine contentment under a most eminent way, crying forth, *blessed be the Name of the Lord*; when he was made to possesse months of vanity, & wearisome nights were appointed for him, then he cryeth forth, *I choose strangling and death, rather than life.* And we shall only say to such, be much in the meditation of that precious and immense hope, & go up to the top of Mount *Pisgah* and there be with *Moses* in the viewing of that land which is afar off. As likewayes, study to seal that divine conclusion, *that he doth all things well*

There is this thirdly which befalleth a Christian, under which he hath a great difficulty to exercise contentment, which is, poverty and want in the world. *Solomon* who was well acquainted with his own heart, and

and knew well his unsuitablenesse to bear such a crosse, cryeth forth, *Prov.* 30. 8, 9. *Give me not poverty, least I steal, and take the name of my God in vain.* It is certain, that to exercise faith upon *God*, for the receipt of common mercies, is more difficult, then to exercise faith on *God* for our eternal salvation, and for our interest in *Jesus Christ*. And we conceive, that the reason why a Christian findeth greater difficulty, to exercise faith upon *God*, for the receipt of these common mercies, then for the receiving of that cardinal and unspeakable mercy, *salvation through Jesus Christ*, to be either this, that faith, when it is exercised upon the one, most simply and immediately relyeth upon the omnipotency and faithfulness of *God*, abstracted from all other props and considerations, for there, sense and reason doth contradict the exercise of faith; but when Christians do exercise faith upon *God* for righteousnesse and salvation, they ordinarily have either somewhat of sense or somewhat of holy reason, that doth under-prop and help their faith: And this likewayes is the occasion of it, that not so ordinarily a Christian is put to the exercise of the one, as unto the exercise of the other: [illegible] believe me, It is no small difficulty, for a Christian to act confidence upon *God*, when he is redacted unto low and pinching estate in the world: And we shall only say to such who murmure and repine under such an estate; cast your eyes upon him who was the heir of all things, of whom it is recorded, *that he had not so much as where to lay his head.* As likewayes, cast your eyes upon a number of that precious cloud of witnesses, who are now entred into the everlasting possession of that precious and excellent lot, who were constrained to wander in dens and caves of the earth, having sheep and goat-skins for their cloathing. Ye are now in the estate of your minority, and therefore are rich but in hope and expectation, and so ye dispense, though ye be not rich in possession; [illegible]

we may ſay, a Chriſtian that hath *him who is all in all* muſt of neceſſity enjoy all and all.

Now that which we ſhall further ſpeak upon this divine quality of contentment, beſides theſe things which we ſpoke at the laſt occaſion, we ſhall point out a little, the difficulty of attaining unto contentment under every lot and eſtate that a Chriſtian falleth in: The difficulty of it is fully ſhown in that word, *I have learned*, as it were, it ſpeaketh ſo much as this, once *Paul* was an ignorant of this myſterious leſſon of divine contentment, but he was inſtructed by him, who is that Prince of Paſtors, by whom he did attain to the knowledge of this: and this ſpeaketh forth the difficulty of it, that a Chriſtian muſt be much in ſelf examination, and ſelf-ſearching before he can attain unto contentment; there is ſomewhat of this pointed at, *Pſal.* 4. 4. *Examine your ſelves upon your beds*, and there is a promiſe annexed to this, *and ye ſhall be ſtill*, *or be ſtill*: And the influence that ſelf-examination hath upon this divine quality of contentment, may not only appear in this, that a Chriſtian who is much in reflecting upon himſelf, taketh up ordinarily a ſuitableneſs betwixt the croſſe and his humour, as it were, he ſeeth infinit wiſdom ſhining, in carving out ſuch a lot and diſpenſation unto him, and ſo is conſtrained to adore the unſearchable riches of the wiſdom of *God*: As likewayes, its influence may be ſhowen in this, that a Chriſtian, who is much in ſelf-examination, doth behold ſuch ſpots and blemiſhes in himſelf, that he is forced to wonder, that God is not worſe with him and ſo is conſtrained *to glorifie God in the fire*. I confeſſe, it may be a wonder, that this is not a wonder unto a Chriſtian every day, that he is not conſumed, and cut off from his right hand. O! that we would onee be much in the ſtudy of your ſelf: That excellent advice of a heathen, γνωθι σεαυτον, *know your ſelf*, were worthy to be practiſed by all Chriſtians; we are too much roving abroad, and too little at home. It is

is reported of ſome Beaſts, that they have eyes to ſee abroad, but have no eyes to ſee at home; which no doubt is the caſe and exerciſe of the moſt part who live in theſe dayes.

This likewayes pointeth forth the difficulty of attaining to this duty of contentment, that a Chriſtian before he can attain it, muſt be much in the exerciſe of theſe two cardinal graces, *Faith and love*; certainly, till once we be ſtudying the exerciſe of them, contentment will be at a low and weak ſtanding with us: And no doubt, the exerciſe of faith, not only in concluding our intereſt in *Jeſus Chriſt*, & in ſealing that concluſion, that *he is ours*, is moſt neceſſary for attaining of contentment; but likewayes the exerciſe of faith for attaining of contentment may be ſhowen in this, that faith is that grace, which is the beſt interpreter of the diſpenſations of God; This may be recorded to the commendation of the grace of faith, that it knowes not, what it is to bring up a bad report upon *God*. And certainly as long as we conſult with theſe three bad counſellors, ſenſe, reaſon, and miſsbelief about the diſpenſations of *God*, this will be the reſult of that counſel to have ſorrow in your heart dayly, but ſtudy to imploy that wiſe counſellor *Faith*, which ſometimes because it is ſo intelligent a grace, is called *underſtanding*, as is clear from *Col.* 2. 2. Now this is clear, that faith hath influence upon contentment, 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. when *David* from this, that God had made with him an everlaſting covenant, he cryeth forth, I am not anxious, though other things ſhould fail, *and though my houſe ſhould not be ſo with God*. As likewayes it is clear *Pſal.* 142. 4, 5. where the exerciſe of faith upon *that God was his portion*, made him with patience ſubmit *though all refuge ſhould fail him*, and *though upon his right hand, or his left hand ſhould care for his ſoul*; As likewayes, *Pſal.* 37. 1. compared with ver. where he preſſeth that duty of truſting in *God*

which they may obviat the exercise of discontent and fretting. Love likewayes no doubt, must be exercised, before a Christian do attain unto this divine quality of contentment: There are these two precious properties of love which are given, 1 *Cor.* 13. 4, 5. *Love endureth long, and love thanketh no evil*, which, no doubt, have great influence upon contentment; we confesse love sometimes is the most impatient grace of a Christian, and sometimes the most patient grace of a Christian; In a manner, love when it is in its most vigorous exercise, will endure more sad afflictions then faith; Faith sometime will be languishing and giving over, when love will support and strengthen it, it being affraid to seal that woful conclusion, *that he is not ours*; love knoweth not what it is to intertain jealous thoughts of him, who is the lover, *it thinketh no evil*: And certainly, when the grace of love is in its vigorous exercise, it is most tender to act any thing, by which the person that is loved may be wronged, or a bad report may be brought up upon him. A Christian that is united unto precious *Christ*, by that golden and invisible chain of his beauty, and transcendent excellency, can with patience endure the losse of all things beside *Christ*; love is peremptory nothing but this, the enjoyment of the loved: And love is sorrowful for nothing, but the losse of him who is loved: he moveth in so high a sphere, and is so far above above all things that are here below, that in a manner, he possesseth his soul in patience in the midst of those revolutions and changes that are here below; In a manner the grace of love doth incorporat a Christian in *Jesus christ*, and doth make him to dwell in Christ as his mansion and house, and so he is not much taken up with those things that are abroad.

There is this likewayes, which speaketh forth the difficulty of attaining unto divine contentment, and it is, a Christian must be much in the exercise of the grace of Mortification to all these passing and transient vanities

vanities of the world; do not these risings and murmurings of spirit, speak the little exercise of Mortification that is amongst us? for if we were once mortified to the world, we should then exercise contentment under every lot: this is clear from the comparing of these two places, *Psal.* 119. 29. where *David* saith, *I have seen an end of all perfection*, which speaketh forth that distinct discovery that he had of the vanity of the world: In a manner, he had it brought within his sight, which is one of the most unerring senses, compared with that most remarkable place; which breaths forth much of divine contentment in him, 2 *Sam.* 15. 25, 26. where he saith, *But if he say, I have no delight in thee, behold, here am I, let him do unto me, as seemeth good unto him.* Here, in a manner, is *David* making a resignation of his crown, and seeing an end of the perfection of that glistering and passing vanity. As likewayes it may be shown from the parralleling of these two places, *Gal.* 6. 14. where *Paul* saith of himself, *I am crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to me*; In a manner *Paul* and the world made a sorrowlesse parting, as two dead men parting one from another: and the words that we have read, where he breatheth forth this divine quality of contentment. I think certainly, a Christian reflecting upon the changeableness, inconstancy and vexation of things here below, will not be much moved with the losse of them. It was upon this ground that heathens did attain unto such a length in this divine quality of contentment, for they beholding, that hopes and desires were the two inseparable companions of those that had most of these fancied delights of the world; for even those that have the greatest abundance are vexed betwixt these two passions, *fear and desire*, fear to losse what they have attained, & desire to have more: We conceive, that it is a remarkable thing that is recorded of *Sesostris* King of Egypt, who was so ambitious, that he would needs have his Chariot drawn

four Kings, one of which had his eye continually upon the motion of the wheel of the Chariot, which the King observing, did ask him the ground why he did so exercise himself? He did most filty reply, it putteth me in mind of the murability & changeableness of the things of the world; for, saith he, the highest part of the wheel is instantly the lowest part, and the lowest part of the wheel, is instantly the highest; which moved that ambitious Prince to desist from so ambitious a practice: And believe me, if ye would read that inscription upon the forehead of all things, *vanity and vexation of spirit*, ye might easily attain unto contentment.

There is this fourthly which speaketh forth the difficulty of attaining unto contentment, that a Christian before he win to it, must necessarily be mortified unto that innate and connatural idol of pride: Pride must be once brought low, before contentment can be attained: We conceive, discontent and pride have sworn a covenant of agreement, that they shall be undivided in their life, and undivided in death, they are chained together by an unchangeable chain of amity; and believe me, it is impossible for a Christian to be discontent, but he must of necessity be proud; And upon the contrary, a Christian that is proud, he must of necessity be a discontented one; for there is nothing that is the mother of contentment so much, as humility, which moveth, a Christian silently to bear his yoke, and sit down, and put his mouth in the dust, because he hath done it. In a manner, a humble one, and one that hath distinct knowledge of his own baseness, knoweth well what it is to cry forth, *Why am I thus?* such a one is much in admiration, and little under murmuring, much in praise, and little in complaint.

There is this lastly, which pointeth forth the difficulty of it, a Christian cannot win to contentment, without live much in heavenly mindedness, and have his spirit in a spiritual and heavenly frame. There is somewhat of

of this pointed at, *Joh.* 14. 1. compared with the 2. *vers.* where *Christ* proposing a remedy unto the discontentment of the Disciples, *that their souls should not be troubled*, he doth begin a discourse of heaven, *that in his Fathers house were many mansions*, and that they had an interest into it: As likewayes, there is somewhat of this pointed at, *Matth.* 6. 25, 26. where to obviat their taking thought what they should eat, or what they should drink, or wherwith they should be cloathed, he desireth them *to seek first the Kingdom of God*. And certainly one that is much taken up in the contemplation of eternal life, and who is viewing these precious and endlesse delights that are at his right hand, moveth in a most composed and divine frame, in a manner, he drowneth the thoughts of his present miseries, in those precious depths of eternity: he knoweth that one moment of the enjoyment of precious *Christ*, shal fully recompense and make up all those sorrows that he hath met with. I know not what shall be the thoughts of Christians, when that volumn of the mercies of the *Lord*, shall be presented unto them, which they have met with here below: how may they be filled with admiration to see that book written within and without, of the receipts of most singular and precious demonstrations of his love.

We shall secondly speak a little to provoke you to the pursuit of this divine quality, and so to these advantages that a Christian hath by exercising contentment under every lot: We conceive, it is so excellent a grace, that grace of contentment, that it is indeed a compound of these five graces, faith, humility, patience, hope and mortification; in a manner contentment is the result of all these graces, exercising themselves in one; and except those be in a most vigorous exercise, that absolute contentment is not easily to be attained: but no doubt it must be an excellent thing that deriveth its pedegree and descent from so high and excellent things, as the precious graces of the spirit. But the first advantage that

that a Christian hath by divine contentment, under his sadest lot, is this, it doth advance a Christian unto most nigh fellowship and correspondence with *God*; as likewayes a contented one receiveth most sweet manifestations of the presence & fellowship of *God* with him under his crosse: It is most certain, that contentment when it is attained, is ordinarily accompanied with most nearnesse & correspondence with him: there is somewhat of this pointed at, *Heb.* 13.5. Where pressing that doctrine of contentment, he saith, *the Lord will not leave you nor forsake you*, which, though we confess it be principally understood of his providence yet it may include the manifestations of his presence: as likewise that in *Jam.* 4.7. *Humble your selves under his hand*, which he is pressing from this duty of contentment, *and he shal lift you up*: And no doubt, that invitation doth oft-times come to a contented Christian, *Come unto me from Amana, and from the top of Shenir, and from the mount Lebanon*, Can. 4. *Christ* loveth to dwell with one that walketh in a composed & silent frame of spirit: And the reason why a contented Christian enjoyeth much of God under his crosse, is because he is much in prayer: It is impossible for a discontented Christian to pray to any purpose under his crosse, for he wanteth that divine qualification that is required in prayer, *to lift up his hands without wrath*, the soul is in such a confused and distempered frame, *it is so troubled that it cannot speak*; this is clear in *Psal.* 77 4, or 5. *v.* where *David* had this advantage of his discontent, *I am so troubled*, (saith he) *that I cannot speak*: though we conceive that there is that which is imitable in *David* in that case, that a Christian, when he cannot speak he may make this prayer, *I am so troubled that I cannot speak*, which was *Davids* practice in that Psalm. There is this second advantage that a Christian hath by the exercise of divine contentment, the want of it doth exceedingly obstruct and hinder a Christians improving of the crosse for his advantage: a

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Christian that is discontent cannot receive any advantage by his crosse; there is somewhat of this pointed, *Heb.* 12.11. where the peaceable fruits of righteousnesse flow to a Christian that is exercised under his crosse, which no doubt doth take in the divine quality of contentment. There are these three precious advantages, that a Christian may have by his crosse, which discontent doth exceedingly obstruct, there is the exercise of humility, the exercise of prayer, & the exercise of mortification: one that is discontent, doth obstruct that great advantage of the crosse, even humility; he is so much in repining against the dispensation of *God*, that he cannot at all sit down, and fold his feet, and quietly bear his yoke. O! but contentment includeth in its bosome much divine humility: In a manner, a Christian, when he is content, is clothed with it: discontentment is the mother of pride, & doth add fuel unto that fire: discontent doth likewayes obstruct mortification & conformity with *God*, which is the precious end of the crosse, *he doth chastise us, that we may be partakers of his holinesse*: And this is the fruit of all these things, to take away your sin. And certainly, a discontented Christian cannot be a Christian taken up in mortification; yea it is most certain, that a Christian may loss more by one hours discontent, then he can gain in many dayes, yea on this side of eternity; O! to what a length may discontent lead one? Likewayes it doth obstruct the exercise of prayer, which is a precious end of the crosse, *in their affliction they will seek me early, and when my chastening hand is upon them, they will then pour forth their prayer into my bosom*: but one that is in a distempered and discontented frame, is incapacitate to go about this duty of prayer, he is so much in conversing with his crosse that he cannot be much in conversing with *God*: And that is certainly one great defect in a Christian, that they are more taken up in studying the disadvantages of the crosse, then in studying the advantages of it;

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moſt part of us, will be Orators like *Cicero* in declaiming our calamities, and in ſetting them froth to the full, as it is clear in *Job*, who proved a moſt elegant Orator in ſetting forth his calamities, but in the exerciſe of praiſe, our tongues ſtick to the roof of our mouth, and we are ſilent unto *God*. There is this third advantage that a Chriſtian hath by the exerciſe of contentment, it doth obviat & obſtruct many temptations, that a Chriſtian is lyable unto by his diſcontentment. I know not any ſin in Scripture that hath produced ſuch bad and woful effects, as that ſin of diſcontentment: what made *Achitophel* to ſeek a cord, and go hang himſelf, was it not his diſcontent? diſcontent is the mother of moſt ſad and deſperat reſolutions; for we cannot ſubmit unto our croſſe. & therefore we ſtudy to extricat our ſelf out of our croſſe, by envolving and entring our ſelves into that endleſs & unſuportable croſſe. Therefore we would deſire you under your afflictions to ſtudy contentment: O! what atheiſtical thoughts will lodge in the boſom of one that is diſcontent: we may ſee them clearly in the practice of *David*, who cryeth forth, under his diſcontentment, *I have cleanſed my heart in vain, and waſhed my hands in innocency*. Certainly there is nothing that will occaſion the want of the faith of the exiſtency of a Deity, & that there is not a *God*, ſo much as this of diſcontentment. There is this fourth advantage that a Chriſtian hath by his contentment, it maketh the croſſe leſt eaſie to a Chriſtian: would you know what is the cheſt ingredient of the heavineſs of any croſſe, it is diſcontent: It is certain, by it we make our chain more heavy & more unſupportable upon our necks; whileas, if we were ſtudying this divine quality of contentment, it would abate much of the bitterneſs of the croſſe: we dare ſay to one that hath attained to contentment, they will cry forth, *the bitterneſs of death is paſt*, & may thus triumph over their croſſe, *O croſſe where is thy ſting, & affliction, where is your victory?* Certainly, diſcontent is

is that which maketh us to ſit down, & cry forth, *my ſtroak is heavier then my groaning*. Did you never know what it was to bear your affliction with much inward joy and peace of mind, when you had this grace of contentment?

There is this advantage likewayes that a Chriſtian hath by exerciſing contentment under his croſſe, that he meeteth with; It is a compendious way for a Chriſtian to win to an outgate under his croſſe. Would you know what is the moſt compendious way, to have the threed of your affliction ſpun out unto a long length? then ſtudy diſcontentment: But would you know what is the moſt ſpiritual & compendious way to have the rod taken off, and to have *God*, no more to turn about the face of his Throne? then ſtudy contentment: In a manner, the croſſe hath gotten & obtained that end and errand why it was ſent, when you do attain to contentment & humility under it: We may ſay of the ſin of diſcontent, that it is a moſt irrational and reaſonleſs ſin, for you cannot by your diſcontent, extricate your ſelf out of your calamities; all the advantage that you have by it is this, to make your bonds ſtronger upon your ſpirits, and to have your fetters and chains lyier heavily upon you.

There is this advantage likewayes that a Chriſtian hath by the exerciſe of contentment under every [illegible] that he meeteth with, it is that divine quality of [illegible] ſoul by which a Chriſtian doth attain to moſt [illegible] fication unto the pleaſures and vanities of a world, how ſweetly will a contented Chriſtian, under the [illegible] of things here below, ſpeak to the diſpraiſe of [illegible] fancied images? it is a poor ſight, to behold a [illegible] ſubſtance tyed unto ſhaddows by theſe two iron ch[illegible] of *love & delight*. Ought we not to ſtudy ſo much [illegible] ambition and ſpiritual generoſity, as to undervalu[illegible] things that are below *God*, as being below us? In a [illegible] ner, as *Jonadab* ſpoke to *Amnon*, 2 *Sa.* 13.4. *Why art thou be*[illegible]

being a kings son, lean from day to day? We may likewayes beſpeak the heirs of the promiſe, and thoſe that are begotten by a lively hope, who being the children of him who is the King of kings, do you wax lean for the loſſe or want of thoſe things that are here below? Have you not a kingdom? And why then ſhould you repine at the loſſe of theſe things, which are but paſſing and tranſient vanities? That which is the great idol of the world, *ſilver and gold*, what is it but more refined duſt? It is white and yellow clay: And we conceive, that much of the excellency of it doth conſiſt in the eſtimation of men, that they have ſo valued it: but one that hath the aſſurance of eternal life, and that *God* is their's, may walk thorow the wilderneſſe with joy. We confeſſe, it is an evil amongſt the heirs of promiſe, that they love to go to heaven thorow a moſt eaſie & pleaſant way, they love to walk to that palace of everlaſting reſt, thorow a valley of roſes; but we muſt not meet with two heavens, it is abundance, if we have that one eternal & everlaſting heaven. And as for the cauſe of diſcontent under our croſs, or any calamity that we meet with, we conceive pride and want of mortification are thoſe two catholick and general grounds of all our diſcontent and impatiency.

We ſhal ſhut up our diſcourſe upon this divine quality of contentment, deſiring that men that have abundance of the world may ſtudy contentment: though this may ſeem a paradox unto many, why thoſe that have enough, ſhould yet be deſired to purſue after contentment: We conceive, there are none more diſcontent, then thoſe that have the greateſt occaſion of contentment; their deſires are ſo much wedded unto things here below, that that voice is never heard among them, *I have enough*, and *I am ſatisfied*: I conceive, that may fully confute that vain opinion that Chriſtians and others do maintain; that if they had ſuch a competency of the world, they would be diſcontent no more but would

ſilently make on in their way; and that which is the ground of their diſcontent is (as they alledge) the want of a competency of ſubſiſtency: I ſhal only ſay to you, that which is recorded of *Alexander*, who after he had purchaſed the poſſeſſion of the world, he was ſo far from attaining to contentment that (as it is recorded of him) he ſat down & wept, becauſe there was not another world to purchaſe. And believe me, this is moſt undeniable, that if you cannot attain to contentment under your preſent lot, it is impoſſible for you to attain to contentment when your lot is better; It is only the deluſion of Sathan, under which the evil of your diſcontent is valled.

But as for thoſe that have abundance of theſe worldly goods, we ſhal preſs this exhortation upon them which is, *Pro.* 23.4. *Labour not to be rich*, which is a thing that ye will not eaſily cloſe with, though certainly *riches* (as he there moſt divinely ſpeaketh) *are a thing that is not*. Now this is moſt clear that there is a neceſſity of preſſing theſe, who have abundance of the world to be content, where *Paul* doth ſubjoyn in the following words, I *know* (ſaith he) *how to abound*. People might have imagined, that is no great leſſon, but believe me it is a great, if not greater, then the other, which is the by which we would preſſe contentment to thoſe that are poor in each lot & eſtate that they fall in here below: know this that the day is coming, when ye ſhal knowledge infinit wiſdom in guiding you to heaven that way. O give *Chriſt* a negative vote in the diſpentation of your lots, & be content to be regulated by him *who is that wonderful counſellor*, who, though he lead you by a way that ye know not, yet take *Chriſts* advice upon implicite faith, for he knoweth not what it is to diſappoint any of their expectations. Study contentment, for that is heaven brought down to earth: what is the happineſſe and bleſſedneſſe of thoſe that are above? It is confined in this one word, *Contentment*; they

have now all anxlety, and all loathing, & all desires save one, taken away from them. O! what a life must it be to drink of the rivers of pleasures? Did you ever know or read of such a river, the waters whereof were pure delight and pleasure? when we shal sit down, and be overjoyed with these consolations, that shall flow from his face, when we shall draw forth that endlesse line and period of eternity, in having joy and light flowing in, admiration and praise flowing out: believe me, the gleanings of a Christian, are better then the vintage of a reprobate; *Little that a righteous man hath, is better, then the riches of many wicked,* for it is a messenger of hope, of that more enduring substance which *Christ* shal give; And since it is the exercise of those that are above, let it be the exercise of those that are below, that there may be a sweet conformity and harmony betwixt the practice of that higher house, and the practice of this lower house that we may have our souls united unto him *who is perfumed with all the powders of the merchant, and whose garments do smell of myrrhe and aloes.* Believe this, time shortly is to have a period, and eternity is to come. Let a Christian comfort himself in this, eternity is at hand, when they shal hear that voice, and truth sealed by the oath of an Angel, *time shal be no more:* Let that precious day come, and let all other dayes passe away.

FINIS.

DIRECTIONS AND INSTIGATIONS To the Duty of PRAYER,

How, and why the heart is to be kept with diligence.

Pressing Arguments and Directions for hearing the voice of the Rod.

Being the sum and substance of nine Sermons (heretofore Printed.)

By Mr. *ANDREW GRAY*, late Minister of the Gospel at *Glasgow*.

The second impression, newly corrected and amended.

Colos. 4. 2. *Continue in Prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.*

Prov. 23. 26. *My son give me thy heart.*

Psal. 94. 12. *Blessed is the man whom thou chastnest, O Lord, and teachest out of thy law.*

Printed by the Heir of *Andrew Anderson*, and are to be sold at his House, one the North-side of the Cross, *Anno Dom.* 1679.

TO THE
READER.

Christian Reader,

IT was not the design of the Lords Servant who preached these following Sermons, to have them thus published: And if he had survived the publishing of them, and of his other Sermons already printed, (and through importunity had condescended they should be put to the Press) they would, no doubt, have come forth more refined, and better digested: and therefore be intreated, **Courteous Reader**, rather take in good part that which is intended for the publick good, then to carp at any thing which doth not satisfie thine own **Genius**; considering that what thou hast here was Gleaned by a Church-writer, gathering together the substance of the matter from the mouth of the speaker: And although, for the most part, the expressions be the same as they were spoken; yet consider that Preaching and Writing have their several ornaments. These things which are enlivened by the expression of the Speaker, sometimes taketh well; which being committed to the Impression of the Press, seemeth flat, superfluous, digressive, and redundant: The zealous Temper of the Speaker in delivering his Message by word, carrying him sometimes without the limits and contextures of the ordinary method.

As these Sermons were delivered with meekness and zeal, so be careful to read them with a meek frame of spirit, to guard off all carping prejudices; and to have thy heart burning with Zeal, to the consuming of soul depressing dulness.

DIRECTIONS and INSTIGATIONS to the Duty of *PRAYER*

SERMON I.

1 Thes. 5. 17. *Pray without ceasing.*

GOdliness is so sublime and divine a thing, and doth so highly elevate the Believer, that is endued with it, that by it he is admitted unto that high pinacle of honour, and inconceivable pitch of dignity, as to be made like unto God, and to have a glorious participation of his divine nature; so that we need not much Rhetorick to commend this unto you who have tasted of the sweetness of it; for *Wisdom will be justified of her Children*, Mat. 11. 19. But there are some of you who savour not the things of God, and to whom these things doth appear but as some *Eutopian* fancy, and notions of a mans brain, who are not much in contemplation of these things. So that though we could speak upon this subject, in such a manner, that the glorious light of it should surround us, yet the blind heart cannot see it, because there is a dungeon within, and till Christ open our eyes (as well as reveal his light) we cannot be enlightned by it. But had we once as much divine understanding, as to take it up in its beauty & necessity, in its advantage and dignities in its comliness and equity; we should esteem it the principle thing which we have to do in all our life time, and should *dig for it as for hidden treasures*, Pr. 2. 4. And there is no part of this royal and beautiful ornament of godliness, but it may commend and ingratiat it self to any who doth not close their eyes. And amongst all the beautiful effects and parts of godliness, this duty & grace of prayer is not the least, and doth not a little commend it; and though it appear sometimes little amongst the thousands of the graces of the Spirit, yet out of it have come excellent things

and it hath not counted it presumption to compare it self with the highest and chiefest. It is that (no doubt) by which a soul is elevated to converse & talk with God, with the holy and blessed Trinity; yea, and that as often and freely as the Christian pleaseth: for there is a door of access standing always open, by which we may enter in, and communicate, and impart our thoughts to God, and to have him making known his mind to us. O, this is a dignity & a priviledge that hath been purchased unto us, at an infinite rate and value, even the precious bloud of Christ; for, no doubt, the door of our access unto God, is through the vail of his flesh: And were this more deeply engraven upon our spirits, we should improve this dignity more, did we once believe the unspeakable highness of this duty of *Prayer*, and the incomprehensible essence of God, that which we now neglect through ignorance, we should fear to meddle with it through a sort of reverence & fear, being *afraid to touch the mount, lest we should be shot thorow*, & looking upon our selves, as unworthy to lift up our eyes to heaven, because we have reproached him so often.

Now there are these two comprehensible and cardinal evils, which doth exceedingly mar & intercept the obedience of Christians unto this great and precious command of *praying without ceasing*, and they are these two, Atheism, and Idolatry: too much confidence in our selves, and too much leaning to our own understanding, which is idolatry; it being a visible breach of the first command. *Thou shalt have none other Gods before me*, *Exod.* 20.3. And too little confidence & trusting in God which is our Atheism, imploying our selves in all, and imploying God in nothing: so that our blessed Lord may propose that unanswerable challenge and question to many of us, *Hitherto you have asked nothing in my Name*, *John* 16.24. And what is this practice, but an involving of our selves in that woful curse, *Cursed be*

be the man that trusteth in man, & maketh his flesh his arm, whose heart departeth from the Lord; Should the living seek the dead, and not their God? who give to all men all things liberally to enjoy, *Jer.* 17.5. Were we dwelling more under the spiritual impression of our utter inability and impotency to save our selves, and that compleat ability and infinite power which is in him to help us, we would bind this precious command of *prayer* as a chain of gold about our neck, and make it *an ornament of Grace to our head*, Prov. 4.9. We should certainly be constrained to cry forth, *All that the Lord hath commanded us, we will do*, Deut. 5.27. And pray that there may be such a heart given to us, as to have our practice correspondent unto our resolutions.

O, what a glorious and unspeakable dignity suppose you it to be, to be daily having your walk in heaven, in those *beautiful streets that are all paved with transparent gold*; and to be conversing with him whose fellowship is of more infinite worth then all imperial dignities. A christian that is much exercised in prayer may have this to say when he is passing thorow the gates of death to long & endless eternity, that he is now to change his place, but not his company. Heaven may be to him but a blessed transition to a more constant and immediat enjoyment of God. O, what a blessed day suppose ye it to be, when ye shall be altogether without the reach of the necessity of this duty, and noble exercise of the grace of *prayer*? For though it be a blessed and most divine exercise, yet it involves an imperfection in its bosome; and so it must necessarily pass away, *when that which is perfect shall come*, 1 Cor. 13.10. O! to be much in correspondence with him, in maintaining communion and fellowship with him. *Ask of him, and it were to the half of his Kingdom*; yea, more, *whatsoever ye ask in his Name, according to his will, and what he sees fit in his wisdom for your good, believing he will grant it to you*, Mat. 21. 21. and

will not at all deny you. We conceive there is not such a comprehensive promise annexed to any duty as this: in a manner, it is the sweet compend and epitome of all Christian promises. What is included here? All things, no doubt, for your good are here included, and nothing of that kind is excluded. We confess, if our enjoyments were regulate according to our desires, they should come far short of that which we stand in need of, & much more they should come short of that which he is willing to give; and therefore we are blessed in this, that he walketh not in his dispensations to us by the rule of our desires, but by that precious rule of his free and condescending grace: for he is able to give unto us *exceeding abundantly; above all that we are able to ask or think*, Eph. 3. 20. If ye would ask what is the great & eminent exercise which a Christian ought to have while he is here below? Belive it, I could give no answer so suitable as *prayer*, this noble & precious exercise of this grace of *prayer*. And if it were asked, secondly, what ought to be the great and eminent exercise of a Christian while he is here? It is *prayer*. And if it were asked, thirdly, what it ought to be? It is only *prayer*, *Prayer above all things, and above all things prayer*. I mean, true, serious, sincere, and not hypocritical prayer: a pleasant retiring and diverting our selves from all other things, to wrestle with God; to leave our servants & our asses at the foot of the mount, until we go up and worship God, and bury your idols under the vail of *Sichem*, and to wash our selves from our pollutions, when we go up to *Bethel*: to return from the confused noise of the multitude of our affairs, unto the pleasant delighting our selves in God. A Christian (the sound of whose feet is much heard in the streets of *New Jerusalem*, who, in a manner, is anticipating the time of his endless enjoyment of it; and who is daily bringing down heaven unto earth, or rather elevating himself towards hea-

heaven, hearing of such an endless command as this, (*pray without ceasing*, *Rom.* 20. 12.) is constrained to cry forth, *Lord what is man that thou should be mindful of him? Or the son of man that thou should visit him, and that thou hast so highly magnified him*, *Ps.* 8. 4. I conceive if a Christian would look upon all his duties of religion under a right notion and apprehension, certainly he will rather take them up as his dignity, then his duty; and rather as the singular tokens and significations of the infinite respect and love of God towards him, then any way given and commanded him: Seing by the practice of them, we should testifie our thankfulness and obedience towards him, surely it were our servitude, and not our liberty to be freed from this blessed and glorious yoke of his commandments. O what a bondage were it for an immortal soul, not always to be living in a direct line of subordination to him, but a natural man hearing of his decree and command of God coming forth; *Pray without ceasing*, will cry out, *this is a hard saying, who can hear it?* *Joh.* 6. 60. We ought to study to be subordinate to God, and in subjection unto nothing which may hinder our subordination unto him; and he who accounts the service of the Lord a wearines, and doth snuff at it, as it were; and who never knew what it was to be bound in spirit, till he go to prayer; believe me, that man is not much taken up in the obedience of this noble and most excellent commandment, *Pray without ceasing*:

Now being come to the words, having spoken at large of that radical and noble grace of faith; we are come to speak of this excellent grace of *Prayer*: and I would have none of you mistaking the nature of this command, or excellent grace; or to conceive that the Apostle doth here so compendise and abridge christians duties, as to confine them within this one duty and grace of *Prayer*, so that we should constantly and perpetually be taken up in this exercise, and so neglect the

the exercise of all other duties, No surely, this is not the meaning of the words: for the words going before the Text may remove this mistake: *Rejoyce evermore*, 1 Thes. 5. 16. but we conceive it holds out these things to us,

First, that in all our lawful diversions & interruptions from this divine exercise & imployment in this noble duty & grace of *Prayer*, we may be keeping our selves in a praying frame & disposition, to that when occasion presents it self to us, we may retire our selves from the noise of our secular affairs, and converse with him; a practice unknown to the most part of the Christians of this generation, who betwixt the time of their conversing with God, & their addresses to his Throne, gives their hearts leave to wander after many vain impertinencies and to rove abroad in the path of their Idols, and *to entangle themselves with the affairs of this world*; so that (in a manner) they are incapacitated for this holy & divine exercise of the duty of prayer, which doth require much divine abstractedness from the world, and the things thereof, and much composedness of spirit, in which our involving of our selves too much in our affairs (that do but by the way belong unto us) doth so much interrupt & hinder us & his exhortation, *pray without ceasing* holds forth unto us that there is no condition, nor estate of life wherein we can be pleased that exeemeth us from the necessity and obedience of being much in the exercise of this noble and excellent duty of the grace of prayer. For if we be under bonds, we must pray that we may be enlarged, and if he lift up the light of his countenance upon us, we must pray that we may be helped to walk humbly with God, and to erect to our selves a dwelling in the dust. when he erecteth to us a throne in heaven and to be enabled not to stir him up, nor awake him before he please. God hath in the depth of his infinite wisdom and unsearchable love towards

wards man, so ordered it, that continual dependance upon him, is both our duty and dignity.

And then secondly, it holds out this unto us, that in the midst of all our business, and other affairs that we go about; we ought to be sending forth secret and divine ejaculations towards God; which practice was no mystery unto *Jacob*, for in the midst of his testament, having blessed six of his sons, and having other six to bless, he breaks forth with that divine thought, *I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord*, *Gen.* 49. 18. neither was this a mystery unto godly *Nehemiah* who while he was standing before the King with the cup in his hand, did pray unto the Lord in his secret & silent way, *Neh.* 2. 4. *He prayed unto the God of heaven.*

And then lastly, this command and exhortation, *Pray without ceasing*, holds forth this unto us, that we should lay hold; yea, more, that we should watch to lay hold upon every opportunity for this duty of *Prayer*; yea more, that we should labour for all occasions for the enjoying of this admirable dignity, which is the scope of that noble command, 1 *Pet.* 4. 7. *But* (saith he) *the end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober & watch unto prayer.* A practice, alace! that is not much now in request, & that the christians of this generation do very much undervalue and set at nought; and we conceive, that which doth so much interrupt our obedience unto this command of praying in publick, and in our praying one with another, is either our Atheism, or our pride; we being more afraid to speak before men, nor to speak before God, which is our atheism; so that our silence is rather from our reverence of men, then from our reverence of God. And then our pride hinders us from it, we being afraid lest going about that duty, we discover our nakedness, and make our shame to appear; and in our impertinent denials of our obedience unto this desire, we study to cover the matter with a pretext of humility, and to

gain reputation amongst men that pride is hid from our eyes,& that we walk low,when in the mean time we sit on high places: & certainly, that which doth so much obstruct our liberty, and our having access unto God in our praying one with another,is our greater fear of these before whom we pray, than of him whom we pray to; & no doubt,the divine impression of a Deity upon our hearts, would much help us to get this overcome. Or it is our pride that hinders us from high thoughts of God,& hinders,and interrupts this holy & divine exercise of the grace of prayer, even our selves; which is the great *Diana* which we so much adore: & about the adoring of which, and her silver shrines(so to speak) so much of our talk and labour is spent; we still proposing that woful end in all our actions, the exalting of our self,and attaining reputation amongst men; and therefore it comes to pass that there is little or no advantage redounding to us by the exercise of publick prayer:so that we may say that which one spake to another purpose,*Cum inter homines sui minor homine redivi.*for we may say this, that when we have been amongst christians, we do oftentimes return less Christians:for if in our praying one with another, we be answered according to the idols of our heart,and have liberty of words and perhaps some real access to the throne of grace, when God lifts us up,we lift up our selves, *being exalted above measure, and sacrificing to our own net* and making a secret feast to our *Dagon*, within the temple of our hearts,proving our selves to be but empty *vine s bringing forth fruit unto our selves. Hos.* 10.1. and hence it is (if a Christian will observe it)that he doth not much advance in the work of mortification by his publick enlargements, & that the power of inquiry in him is not much restrained by these, but presently after his weeping over himself for some short coming,some new temptation presenting it self unto him, envolves him in the

the like, or (it may be)in a worse sin: and ordinarily our publick enjoyments and enlargments are not constant and permanent by our quenching his holy Spirit.

However,by the way we would say that which a heathen said,it is much for a man to be as serious alone in the exercise of his mind and affections in pursuing after these duties, as when he is in company,and that which exceedingly hinders a mans obedience when he is alone unto this command *pray without ceasing*,is either the want of a solid conviction of the necessity of this duty,or else it flows from a not being convinced of the advantage that may be found in this exercise of our secret retirements with God and obstructing our selves from the noise of the world,to converse with him. What joy in the holy Ghost? what mortification of our idols? what divine conformity and likeness to the Lords blessed and glorious Image might we attain to by this? As likewise we may superadd this,the want of the solid conviction of these unspeakable disadvantages that are to be found in our woful neglecting and sinful suspending of the exercise of this duty when we are alone, which are best known to those which are most conversant with their own spirits: sure we are *through the sloathfulness of our hands, the house droppeth thorow, and our building doth decay*, and we are become remarkable servants unto our own lusts and corruptions.

Now is there any of you that at the very reading of these words, *pray without ceasing*, may not reflect himself, and judge himself eminently guilty of a breach of this commandment and excellent duty? whereas *Eliphaz* did accuse *Job*,*Thou restrainest prayer before God*, *Job* 15.4. surely he may justly charge it on many; yea and alace! upon the most part of Christians of this generation, there are many here, who do pass under the notion of Saints and Christians, who never did much study to obey

command, there are many here who need not much arithmetick to calculate all their prayers that they have poured out before his throne. O! whither is your devotion gone? If *David* and *Daniel* were now alive, would not their practice condemn the Christians of this generation who at morning, at noon, and at the evening tide did call upon him, yea, in the silent watches of the night, and at midnight did rise & *seek their maker, who gives unto his own their songs in the saddest night of their affliction*? we conceive also, if *Anna* that precious woman were now alive to whom that excellent testimony is given, *Lu.* 2. 37. *She was a widow about fourscore four years, which departed not from the Temple but served God with fasting and praying night and day*, might not she provoke many women, yea, all men and women unto an holy emulation in this so singular and divine a practice? Alace, there is none now a days upon whom so brave a testimony could be passed as was upon her. We must either conceive that the way to heaven is more easie then it was before in ancient times, or else that there is not so much delight and solace to be had in him, as was before: were we daily tasting of that *pure river of life that flows out from beneath the Throne of God*, & of its sweetness, *which causeth the lips of those that are asleep to speak*, we would be more taken up in giving obedience unto this precious command of *prayer*, and if we were sleeping more in the bed of love, we would be less sleeping in the bed of security; we would likewise imbrace more abstractedness from the world, and more familiarity with God. But our visits are rare, because we are not constant in prayer, and fervent in spirit, seeking the Lord. It is no wonder that we forget what an one he is, because it is long since we did behold him: We may forget his form and loveliness, there is such a number of days and woful space of time interveening betwixt our enjoyment of him.

Now

Now we shal not dwel long in pointing out unto you what prayer is, we conceive it is a sweet travelling & trafficking of the soul betwixt emptiness and fulness, betwixt want and all-sufficiency, and betwixt our inability to help our selves, and his ability to help us; the one depth calling upon the other depth, or in short it is a souls conference with God.

Neither shall we stand in the proving of this unto you, that it is the duty of a Christian to be much taken up in the continual exercise of this duty of prayer, the Text doth sufficiently prove it; But we shall only for the more clearing of this, point out one place of Scripture, and that is in *Eph* 6. 18 where we are exhorted to *pray with all manner of prayer and supplication*, &c. which we conceive to be understood both of publick and private prayer, and that we should watch to the exercise of both these, & that we should not be in the exercise of these by starts and firs, but that we should continue in them with all perseverance as the Text doth clearly hold forth.

Neither shall we insist long in speaking unto this, what is the spirit of prayer; We conceive it doth not stand in that promptness & volubility of language that we use before him, for there may be much of that, & little of the spirit; and upon the contrair, there may be little of that, or nothing at all, and yet much of the spirit; yea, we are certain that the spirit is sometimes an impediment unto much language, for either in our presenting or expressing our grief before God, our spirits are so overwhelmed within us, and so troubled that we cannot speak, so that sighs, or silent groans are rather our oratry then the multitude of words; likewise in the exercise of joy, the soul is so filled, and in a manner, overshadowed with the holy Ghost, that the Christian is rapt up in holy admiration and astonishment; so that in a manner he loses not only the exercise of invention, but also the exercise of speech,

he is so much taken up in gazing at that which he doth enjoy: and in a pleasant beholding and contemplation of him who hath ravished him *with one of his eyes, and with one chain of his neck*, so that he can speak no more, but beginneth to wonder, *his tongue cleaveth to the roof of his mouth*, and his judgement is so confounded with the inexpressible sweetness and glory of him that appeareth, and his affection doth so swell and run over all its banks, that in a manner, he is cloathed with a blessed impossibility to have the use of his tongue; and therefore is beginning to admire that which he cannot speak; however he that *hath much of these things, hath nothing over, and he that hath little, hath no lack.*

Neither doth the spirit of prayer consist in the fineness and eloquency of our dictions, these things being rather to prove our selves Orators, then such as pray in the Holy Ghost.

But we conceive it doth more consist in the voice of the affections, nor in the voice of words, & in having unexpressible and unutterable sighs and groans of the Spirit, which is indeed that true spirit of adoption which he hath given unto us; whereby we cry unto him, *Abba Father, Gal. 4. 6.* If we speak no more in prayer then what our affections and souls do speak, truly we would not speak much; if we speak more with zeal & affection, that vain prolixity that we have in this duty of prayer, would be much compended & abridged. Neither shal we speak long on this, how much it is a christians concernment to be convinced of the absolute necessity of a Mediator, & of a days-man that must lay his hands upon us in all our approaches to God: & truly we conceive if many of you were posed upon last the deep impression of the need that you have of Jesus Christ & of him that hath taken that glorious name & attribute unto himself of being the *Counsellor, Is.* were engraven upon your spirits when ye went to pray-

prayer, you should find it a difficulty to fall upon the number of the days; and I conceive that the want of the right apprehensions and uptakings of God and of our selves, is the reason why this great mystery & divine duty of the Gospel, to wit, the imploying of Jesus Christ in prayer, is so great a mystery both unto our judgements and affections. However know that this is a duty belonging both to your knowledge and practice. There are many Christians who to their own apprehensions, have made a great progress in the course of Christianity, who yet may turn back and learn that great and foundamental lesson to call on his Name, sure we are, were this more believed, that *God is a consuming fire* without Jesus Christ, we would not be so presumptuously bold as to approach before God, either in publick or in private without him, who by his blood must quench this divine flame, and who must remove that Angel that stands with the *flaming sword* in his hand, marring our access to God; Christ must be to us *Melchisedeck, a King of righteousness and of peace.* He no doubt, is that trysting place in which God and sinners must meet: he is that glorious ladder that reaches from heaven to earth, by which we must ascend up to God: his humanity (which is the foot of that ladder) is the door of our access by which we must ascend to the top, which is his divinity, we did once by our iniquity fix a gulf betwixt God and us; but Jesus Christ by taking on our nature did make a golden bridge over that gulf, by which we may go over and converse with God.

And first, surely want of the conviction of this, doth make us come with less confidence unto him: for upon what can ye build your hope, except it be upon that *stone of Israel, and on his beloved Son in whom he is well pleased? Mat. 3. 17.* we ought to rest upon him who is that *Immanuel, God with us.*

2. As likewise the want of this, is the cause of the li-

tle reverence that you have to God in your approches unto him; for did we once take him up under this notion, how inaccessible God is, except he be made accessible by him who *is the way, the truth, and the life*, Jo. 4. 6. O, how would we fear to draw near to such a holy God.

3. And this likewise is the occasion of the little delight we have in conversing with him, we are perswaded that there is no delight in this blessed exercise, but through him who is the *vision of peace* betwixt the Father & us; his divine nature is an impregnable rock which we cannot scale but by his humane nature, & we must make use of Christ in all our approaches to God, not only as one who must give us access unto him, & open a door unto us, through which we must enter into the holiest of al, (he must draw aside the vail that is hanging over his face, & we must go in walking at his back, as is clear, *Rom.* 5.2.) But we must likewise make use of Christ in all our approaches unto God as one by whom we must be enabled to do every thing he calleth for at our hands. If the faith of that saying which is in *John* 15. 5. *without me ye can do nothing*, were more deeply engraven upon, & stamped on the tables of our hearts, we would be walking alongst our pilgrimage with the sentence of death in our bosome, & have our confidence fixed on him above; For there is not only an inability in our selves to do any thing, but also we are cloathed with a woful impossibility, as that word doth hold forth, *without me ye can do nothing*. And certainly the lower we will descend in the thoughts of our own strength, we are the more fit to receive this divine influence from him by which we are capacitated & rendred able for the doing of every duty. We must likewise make use o Jesus Christ in all our approaches unto God as one before whom all our prayers must be accepted before him. The sacrifices of *Judah* cannot come up with acceptance upon that golden

golden altar before the throne, except they be presented by him *who is that great Master of request*, this is clear from *Rev.* 8. where by the Angel that is spoken of there, we understand to be the Messenger of the Covenant; and by that incense, we understand the merits of Jesus Christ, which is that precious vail that is spread over these sinful imperfections of our duties, which they must be mixed with, before they be an acceptable savour unto God. O! how doth he abominate and abhore all our prayers: if they want this precious ingredient, that sweet smelling incense, the merits of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ? it is he that doth remove all these rovings, and vain impertinencies of ours, that we have in the exercise of that duty, & doth present them in a more divine frame & contexture. He reduces them into few words, & makes them more effectual for the obtaining of our requests. If the consideration of this were more with us, O how wold it make Jesus Christ more precious in our eyes? As likewise, it would discover unto us a more absolute necessity in having our recourse to him in all our approaches to God; such is the depth of the unsearchable grace of Christ, and of his infinite love towards sinners, that the voice of complaining on them was never heard in heaven. Christ he never spake evil, but always good of believers before his Father, notwithstanding he hath oftentimes spoken reproofs to themselves, this is clear from *Joh.* 17. 8. where giving an account of the carriage and practice of his Disciples unto the Father, he doth exceedingly commend their faith, and their carriage towards him, and saith, *They have received me, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me*, and yet in *Joh.* 14. 1. he doth challenge their unbelief; the one speech he directeth to God his Father, and the other he directeth unto them. Love in a manner, doth silence all the noise of com-

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plaints with him, and maketh him always breath out love in his expressions of them before the throne. He will whiles speak roughly to believers here to themselves; but to say with reverence to his blessed Name, he never telleth an il tale of them behind their backs.

But now we shall insist a little in pointing out what things are convenient and suitable for a Christian to exercise himself into, before he go about this divine and holy duty in conversing and speaking to God.

And first, we think a Christian before he come and take upon him this holy and divine exercise of talking with God, he must be much in the exercise of meditation, not only of the inconceivable highness and dignity of that glorious and inexpressable person with whom he is to converse: but also upon the inconceivable baseness and lowness of himself; so that by the consideration of the highness of the one, he may be provocke to reverence, and by the consideration of the other, he may be provockt to loathing.

1. A Christian before he go to prayer, would study to have a deep impression of these things which he is to make the matter of his supplication of to God, and to have them engraven upon his heart: and truely we think the want of this is oftentimes the occasion of that wofull evil of lying unto the holy Ghost; for we complain in prayer, and personate or counterfeit resentment for these things which never before was the case of our hearts. Oftentimes we speak many things with our lips, ere we study to have our hearts endyted with these things that we speak. And likewise in the exercise of blessing & praising him, from the consideration of any great or desireable mercy, we do personate and feign joy from the consideration of these things which before we never made the matter of our joy, because they never were much the matter of our consideration. It were, no doubt, the great advantage of a Christian in the exercise of prayer, to be much ta-

taken up in the obedience of this command; *Eccles. 5. 2. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter any thing before God, for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth, therefore let thy words be few.* Seldom doth the Christian talk or speak with God, but if he had as much grace as to reflect upon it, he may be convinced that he is uttering things that are not fit to be spoken to God. O to be studying that divine abridgement of our prayers, which no doubt, would make us to speak nothing before him, but what our hearts doth indite, there is something of this holden out in the practice of *David*, *Psal.* 45. 1. where he beginneth with that, *My heart doth indite a good matter*: and then he subjoyns, *My tongue is as the pen of a ready writer*. Our oratry might be more refined, and confined likewise; and it would be more effectual for the obtaining of our desires, if we were studying this. O that our hearts might speak more in prayer and our tongues less, we through the multitudes of business produce multitudes of dreams to our selves.

Thirdly, this is likewise requisite for a Christian before he go to prayer, to be studying holiness, to endeavoring to have these filthy garments wherewith he is cloathed, changed; with change of rayment, he must put off the shoes off his feet, because he is to *stand upon a holy ground*. This was the commendable practice of that holy man *David*, *Psal.* 26. 6. *I will wash my hands in innocency, then will I compass thine altar, O Lord.* This is likewise clear from *Exod.* 30. 19. where *Aaron* and the sons of *Levi* were to wash their hands and their feet in that brazen laver which did stand betwixt the Tabernacle of the congregation and the Altar when they came near to minister, and burn offerings by fire unto the Lord; We must likewise endeavor much to symbolize that practice, to have our selves washen in that laver of regeneration, and in that *precious fountain that is opened*

house of David for sin and for uncleanness, Zech. 13. 1. before we enter into the holiest of all. What ornament is so suitable for on that is walking unto that higher palace, but that glorious ornament of holiness, without which we are rendered unacceptable to God, and with which we may with confidence and boldness go and serve him in his holy Temple? No doubt, if the deep impression of that absolute holiness, and purity of that Majesty with whom we are to converse (when we go to prayer) were engraven upon our spirits, we should study to be like him; for the foundation of friendship, fellowship doth somewhat stand in a similitude of natures, & some in conformity on with another.

And lastly, when a Christian is going to prayer, he ought to be much in the consideration of that advantage and dignity that is to be found in the exercise of this duty, this wold make us more ardent and serious in the study of the former: and unless we superad this to the rest, we cannot long continue in a constant endeavour after the attainment of these three former qualifications, who are required of one that would approach unto God.

Now we shall shut up our discourse by speaking a little unto this, what ought to be the sweet companions of a Christian that is going about the exercise of this duty, in a serious, and not in a hypocritical manner.

1. He wold study to have his spirit under the deep impression of a deity; & take up this, that he is talking with one, before whom angels (these glorious and excellent spirits) do cover their faces with their wings: which, no doubt, doth point out that holy reverence that they have of him: their long familiarity and constant conversing with God, hath not removed that due and convenient distance which they ought to keep with him, and certainly, were he known to us by none other Name, but by the Name of being *merciful*, yet ought we to fear the Lord, and his goodness. O how much

much more he being made known & revealed to us by that great & terrible Name *Jehovah*, by which *he is exalted above all Names that is in heaven, or in earth?* *Phil.* 2. 9. And by which is pointed out that infinite distance, that is betwixt God and us. No doubt, if the impression of a Deity were with us, it would remove much formality that we use in prayer; it would likewise remove much of our misbelief that we have in al our approaches unto him, were we afraid lest that woful inscription that *Paul* did discern to be engraven on an Altar, at *Athens, to the unknown God*, were found on us, alace! I fear it may be engraven on most part of our devotions, & likewise that wherewith Christ did challenge the people of *Samaria*, he may challenge many of us, *Joh.* 4. 23. And it may be written on our practice, *ye worship, ye know not what*, we are as those who *bless an idol*, and no doubt, such sacrifices as these are, *as if we were offering swines blood, and cutting of a dogs neck, which are abomination unto God, Is.* 66. 3.

2. That should be the sweet companion of a Christian in this exercise of prayer, the excellent grace of humility: we must put off our ornaments, and cloath our selves with sakcloath, and spread ashes upon our heads, when we begin to speak to him. He that sits nearest the dust sits nearest the heavens. We must be walking under the impression of this, that we are not worthy to lift up our eyes to heaven; and with holy *Abraham* (upon whose effigy this was engraven, *Jam.* 2. 23. *That he was a friend of God*) when he begins to talk to this glorious & incomprehensible Majesty, in a manner, he conceived it to be presumpeion, *Gen.* 18. 27. *Behold now*, saith he, *I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes*, He doth prefix a note of admiration, *behold!* importing so much that it was a bold adventure for so low a person to speak to so high a Majesty, or for so sinful a creature to open his mouth unto so pure and spotless an one; that

the footstool should speak to him who is the Throne; and no doubt, were this more our exercise, we might be receiving more remarkable significations of his respect and love towards us. What is the royal gift which he giveth to these that are humble? *Grace.* For as the Apostle saith, *Jam.* 4. 6. *He giveth grace to the humble*, &c. His love is seeking that person that sits lowest, even as the waters do seek the lowest ground, He that is first in his own estimation, is last in the estimation of God: but he that is last in his own estimation, is amongst the first in the estimation of God. Therefore, no doubt, that is a suitable cloathing for a person that is to go to the court of heaven, which the Apostle *Peter* doth require, 1 *Pet.* 5. 5. *Be cloathed with humility.* O! but that woful evil of pride which doth either arise from our ignorance of our selves; or from our ignorance of God, doth both obstruct our access unto him, and the return of our prayers. If we should give a description of the persons that is admitted to detain Christ in his galleries, we could not give it in more convenient and suitable terms nor this, that he is *a humble and contrite spirit, Isa.* 66. 2. and 57. 15.

And a third sweet companion of a Christian in the exercise of this duty of Prayer, is faith and confidence in God; but we have to do with one who is *the hearer of prayer*, & who is willing to give unto us all things that we desire, if we ask in faith, for we must exercise faith, not only upon his promises, but likewise upon that glorious & incommunicable attribute of God that is given unto him; *Psa.* 65. 2. that he is *the hearer of prayer*: want of this, maketh us come little speed, and we think likewise, that the want of this doth make us give so little in expectation, and wait with patience to hope at the posts of his door, until we receive a return. Is it any wonder that our prayers be *as the beating of the air, & the powring out of some empty words*, if we be not convinced in this, that he is not like unto us? God is not like *Baal*, who because of sleep, or some other business cannot give present audience to our desires, so that we need not be constrained to cut our selves with knives, or to leap upon the Altar, to provok him to cause fire to descend upon our altar, to burn our drowned sacrifice, he is able to give audience to us, as if there were no other to imploy him. Multitudes of supplications wil be no interruption unto the audience of our desires: he hath that royal prerogative, and eminent excellency above all Judges of the earth, that he can take in many bills at once, which is a demonstration of the omnipotency and infinite understanding and knowledge of God, if that word, *Mat.* 22. 21, 22. were believed, *Whatsoever you ask in prayer, believing you shall receive it.* O! how would we study to have this necessary and sweet companion of faith going alongst with us in all our prayers, and as *James* speaketh, *Chap.* 1. 6. *He that asketh, let him ask in faith, for he that wavereth and doubteth, is as the waves of the sea, and can receive nothing.*

4. A fourth sweet companion in the exercise of prayer, is fervency. Can we live under such a woful delusion, as to conceive that God heareth those suits and petitions which we do scarcely hear our selves; can we have much zeal in proposing our desires when we do it with such a woful indifferency? We have the example of that holy man *David*, to commend this unto you, *Ps.* 39. 12. where we may behold a glorious gradation and climax: for first he sayes, *hear my prayer*, and that not being sufficient, he doth ascend one step higher, and saith, *Hold not thy peace at my cry*, that voice being a little louder than the voice of prayer: and yet again he ascendeth one step farther, and saith, *Hold not thy peace at my tears.* These silent crys, the tears of a Christian, have most Rhetorick, and the loudest voice in heaven, these sweet emanations

and flowings out of water from that precious fountain of a contrite and broken spirit, they do no doubt ascend high, and have a great power with him who is *Almighty*. *Jacob*, in a manner did hold that Angel that wrestled with him, with no other cord, but with the cord of supplications, as is clear from *Hos.* 12. 4. and in *Gen.* 32. 26. Did ever your eyes behold such cords and bonds made of tears? No doubt, these are of a beautiful frame and contexture, and of infinite more value than the most precious & rare chains that the greatest Princes in the world doth wear as ornaments, & truly the want of this doth proceed from the want of the solid conviction of the absolute necessity that we stand in of these things: for as one said well, strong necessities make strong desires. And also it doth proceed from the want of the consideration of the precious excellencies that are to be had in these things that we ask, the eminency of a thing doth encrease the vigor of our pursuit after it, and maketh us with seeking of it, mount up with wings as Eagles, over all these difficulties that ly as impediments in our way, ought we not to be emulous of the practice of *Ninive*, of whom this is recorded, *that they cryed mightily to God*, *Jon.* 3. 8. We think many Christians of this generation (because of their wosul remisness and coldness of affection in proposing their desires) may be constrained to mourn over all their mournings, and pray over all their prayers.

Now if a Christians heart be the Temple of the holy Ghost, O, how ought he to pray? for it is the diamond which the Apostle puts in the upshot of al the graces of the Spirit, *Eph.* 6. 18. and after which he exhorteth a Christian seriously to pursue. Oh, I think it is a mystery that we cannot well take up; but these that are most in the exercise of it, can best resolve it, & take up its precious effect; but believe me, I think it is one of the most dark mysteries that is to be found in the

the practice of a Christian, except he in whom is all *the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*, to unfold this one divine sentence, *pray without ceasing*, it shall always remain a mystery to our obedience, it is a question, we confess, that is sometime difficult to determine whether some duties of a Christian that are commanded to be done by us, be more mysterious to our understanding, to take up the nature of them, & what is commanded in the lively and spiritual exercise of such a duty? Or whether they be more mysterious to us in our practice & obedience? We confess, it holdeth not alike in all things, it being more easie for us to know, then to practice many things: we conceive it holdeth out in some, and even in those things and duties that are most obvious (as we conceive) and that have least of the mysteriousness of the Gospel engraven upon them, &c.

SERMON II.

1 Thess. 5. 17. *Pray without ceasing.*

IT were for our great advantag to be much taken up in a serious & divine consideration of that most sad but most true saying, *That many are called but few are chosen*; yea, if there were but one of each twelve that are within this house to day, to whom Christ thus (sadly) should speak, *One of you will betray me*, ought ye not all to be put to a holy inquiry and search, and say unto him, *Master, is it I? Master, is it I? and to be exceeding sorrowful*, until that concerning question be determined unto you? How much more ought ye to accomplish a secret and serious search, to know whether or not *ye be written amongst the living in Jerusalem, and have passed from death to life?* seeing alace! I think it is more probable, that if precious Christ were to speak to each twelve that are within this house, we are afraid that he should thus (sadly) speak

there are eleven of you that shall betray me, and one only shal pass free. And, O that the number of those who are to betray the precious son of God, were reduced to so few, though indeed these be many.

If he *who seeth not as man seeth, who reproveth not after the hearing of the ear, nor after the seeing of the eye,* (who can reject an *Eliab*, the more fair in shew and appearance, and can choose a strippling like *David*) were to come to give his verdict, and pass his sentence on all of us that are here; ah! upon how many of our foreheads might be engraven this dreadful sentence, *Mene, Mene, tekel, uphrasin: thou art weighed in the ballance, and art found light*; I am afraid that even some (professors) *who have a form of godliness, and yet have not the power thereof; and are like those painted sepulchres, that are fair without, but within are full of dead mens bones*; he shall reject their confidence, and *cut off their hopes as a spiders web*; Religion that is pure and undefiled, is another thing then we take it to be: We must not go to heaven in a bed of roses, we must *strive, and earnestly contend to enter in at the strait gate*: And if ye would have a description, and definition of those that are shut out from the presence of the Lord, who are of that woful number, to whom *Tophet is ordained of old*, the Psalmist giveth a description of them, *Psal.* 14. 4. *They call not upon God.* But if we conceive that this is the description of these that shall be eternally secluded from Gods presence, that they pray not unto God, ye will think that ye are not of that list, for who is so absurd (say ye) that will not pray to him that is almighty, & pay that due homage unto him who is the *Creator of the ends of the earth.*

But unto such atheists as these, I shall propose these four things, which if you be not able to give a positive answer unto, be perswaded that ye never knew what it is to pray unto God, so as to have your offerings coming up with acceptance upon his holy Altar.

1. Did

1. Did ye ever know what it was to go to prayer upon an internal principle of love, & the grace of Christ constraining you? are there not many of you, O atheists, who do not know what this means, to have the precious bonds of love constraining & imposing a blessed necessity upon your hearts to converse with God in prayer? did ye ever know what it was to bind your *sacrifices to the horns of the altar* by the cords of love?

2. Did ye ever know what it was by prayer, to attain to more conformity with God, and to crucifie your lusts? there are many, & I may say some professors to whom this is a mystery, through fasting and prayer to crucify an idol or lust. It were good ye had a holy jealousie over your selves, that you are in *bonds of iniquity, and gall of bitterness*. The most part of our mortification is rather by consent then by constraint; our idols doth rather go out, nor are cast out, or else our idols dyeth rather to us then we die to them, hence it is that, oftentimes after he had famished our gods, we sit down and bemoan our selves over the graves of our idols, and as *David* lamented over *Absolom*, so do we over our lusts.

3. Did ye ever know what it was to distinguish betwixt absence and presence? when did ye meet with such a place which ye might call *Peniel*, that you had seen God face to face: & in another place you might have said, *Here he did turn about the face of his Throne, & did vail himself with a cloud*, so that I know not where to find him.

4. I shall in the last place propose this question which I conceive may not only convince profane Atheists, but also some who have a shew of Religion. Did you ever know what it was to sit down & lament over absence from Christ, & think it an importable want? Oh, where is the exercise of the imparient grace of love now gone? O, but Christ may live long in heaven, before the most part of us give him a visit, I fear he visit us, before we visit him;

And now, O Atheiſts, examine your ſelves by theſe and be perſwaded, that if ye know not what theſe things mean, ye are yet ſtrangers unto the ſpiritual exerciſe of this duty of prayer, and all your prayers that ever ye have ſpoken, have been but *aſmoak in his noſtrils, and a fire that burneth all the day* Believe me in this, O men of the world, that in the day when ye ſhal ſolemnly appear before God in the *valley of deciſion*, this ſhall be a great *Item* of your dirty, that you have prayed ſo much, or rather that you have profaned his Holineſs (which you pretend to love) ſo much, O that all of us were not *almoſt, but altogether perſwaded to be chriſtians.* Seeing Chriſt doth offer that precious dignity to make us not only *ſons in law to a King which ought not to ſeem ſmal in our eyes*; but alſo to make us *Kings and Prieſts unto God*, can we refuſe ſuch an offer as this? Might he not ſummond the heavens and the earth, and angels, & our brethren who are now above to behold a wonder? yea, and no doubt, it is a wonder that any of us ſhould ſlight ſuch an offer.

Now if any of you would ask at me that queſtion what is and ſhould be the native exerciſe of a chriſtian while he is here below in the land of his exile, & a ſtranger from his fathers houſe? Whether he ſhould exerciſe himſelf in ſinging or in praying? We anſwer that prayer is, and ſhould be the main exerciſe of a chriſtian, while he is here below in the land of his exile & is a ſtranger from his fathers houſe, when the promiſes are not yet accompliſhed, nor all the prophecies fulfilled, we confeſs, the exerciſe of joy & rejoycing in God, ought to be a neceſſary duty & exerciſe of a chriſtian: we may ſing the ſongs of theſe excellent Muſicians, & heavenly Harpers, *that ſtand upon the ſea of glaſs having harps in their hands.* And our ſongs which is here below; is only different in degrees their ſongs are of a higher key, and our ſongs are a lower key, though we confeſs they are more exper

in that divine art, for we oftentimes ſpill our ſongs in the ſinging of them: as likewiſe they are more conſtant in that bleſſed exerciſe, but alace, we are oftentimes conſtrained to hang our harps on *the willow trees, while we ſit by theſe rivers of Babel.* But if we would praiſe more, we ſhould pray more, and if we did pray more, we ſhould praiſe more. O! but prayer would furniſh us matter of new ſongs every day; and if we were much in that exerciſe, we might have that bleſſed Pſalm to ſing, *He hath put a new ſong into my mouth, even praiſe unto the Lord.* I think a chriſtian may examine himſelf by this unerring rule of his growth in grace, he may know it by the exerciſe of ſecret prayer: this is the pulſe of a chriſtian, by which he may know his conſtitution, and the ſlow beatings of the pulſe of the chriſtians of this generation, doth prove this unto us, that grace is in a remarkable decay; it is groaning within us, *as the groans of a wounded man.* O, but if we were more obedient unto this precious command, *pray without ceaſing*, our grace might be more vigorous, *and our bed might be green*, and we might be *bringing forth fruit even in our old age.*

But now to that which we ſhall inſiſt mainly upon, in going through this duty and grace of prayer (beſide theſe things that we ſpake at the laſt occaſion) *viz.* what are theſe ſtrong impediments and obſtructions that doth imped and hinder a chriſtians acceſs unto God in his ſecret retirements in prayer? If we were asked at, when did we laſt behold him: We may ſay that which *Eſther* ſpake to the ſervants of *Mordecay, it is thirty days ſince I did behold the Kings face.* But alace, our lot of lamentation and defection from God, may aſcend to a higher pitch; yea, it is many thirty days ſince we did behold the King. O, but we are great ſtrangers in heaven, and though we ſhould be eternally ſo, we could not debate with his Juſtice.

the first impediment that obstructs a Christians liberty in having access to God in his secret devotions, is that woful and carnal design which he doth propose to himself in the exercise of that duty: we are low in our designs, which makes us low in our enjoyments, this is clear, *Jam.* 4.3. where this is given as a reason why we do not receive that which we pray for, *we ask amiss, to spend it upon our lusts.* We pray in secret that we may be more fitted to pray when we go abroad, & thereby get applause: hence it is that so much of Christians pursuits are rather taken up in seeking after the ornaments of prayer, then after the grace of prayer; rather to pursue after these things that are adorning in it, then these things that are saving in it, & even often times, the ministers of the Gospel have that woful end proposed to themselves. How oftentimes do our hearts speak that which *Saul* said to *Samuel*, *Honour me this day before the people and Elders of Israel.* And I think this is an evil which Christians may easily discern & take up, whether or not they do propose themselves as the last & ultimate end of all their devotions? And one that hath this woful qualification, he doth resent & grieve more for his publick straitnings and bonds, then for these which he hath in private. Are there not many of us here who will rise up from secret prayer under the undeniable conviction of much distance from God, & yet never know what it is to have an anxious thoght about it? O, when did absence from Christ in our secret retirements, make us *forget to eat our bread.* Ah, that sickness of love, whether is it gone? we are sick unto death of imaginary health; and we wish that that sickness of love were more epidemick and universal in those days, which were not a sickness unto death, *but for the glory of God.* And in our publick straitnings, when we converse one with another, how much will we grieve and repine, though we confess these are rather the grievings of our pride, then

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of our love: rather lamentation, because of the loss of our reputations, then because of the loss of our absence with Christ? One that hath this woful qualification of proposing themselves as the end of their devotions, they may likewise know it by this, that when they are straitned in their publick aproaches to God, and when others are inlarged, they envy and fret; they are rather indued with envy, then a holy emulation; which proveth unto us, that we are not great in the Kingdom of Heaven, because we are not much taken up to glorifie God, which hath given such gifts to men: but we sit down at his wise and wonderful dispensation, *That he hath given unto others five talents, and to us but one*; so that oftentimes we are provoked to that impious course, as *to bind up our talent in a napkin, and to dig in the earth, and hide our Lords money.* Studying by that practice to appropriate the estimation of humility unto our selves, when we cannot get the estimation of one that is eminent in parts and abilities, which doth oftentimes provoke God to take that from us that we seem to have, *and to give to him that hath more, so that he may have abundance.* One that hath this woful end himself, as the end of all his devotions, may likewise know it by this, that seldom or never doth he go about that exercise of prayer from a principle of love, or delight to walk with God, but to attain the expressions of prayer, hence it is, when most part of Christians come abroad, they do rather prove themselves Orators, then Christians, the voice of words is more heard, then the voice of the affections, and these inexpressible sighs and groans of the spirit.

Ah! the real and spiritual exercise of that duty, it is far gone into decay, there is not one amongst a thousand that doth study earnestly after it. Think ye to pursue and win God by your fair blosoms and flourishing Rhetorick, gallantness and fineness of expres-

 sions?

ſions? Will not he who is infinite in underſtanding, laugh at your folly ? Are ye to perſwade a man ? Are ye not rather to perſwade God ? Ye may likewiſe know it by this , whether or not ye propoſe your ſelves at the laſt and ultimate end of all your devotions , and it is when ye have moſt enlargements and acceſs unto God, in your ſecret retirements, & ye deſire and covet to have manieſt ſpectators and auditors , that ſo they may paſs that teſtimony on you, that *ye are men greatly beloved of God*, that doth receive ſuch ſingular teſtimonies of his love , and of his reſpects: but wo be unto you that are ſuch hypocrites , *who covet the greetings in the markets and the uppermoſt rooms at feaſts, deſiring to be called of men, Rabbi : Verily ye ſhall have your reward; When he that is firſt ſhall be laſt , and he that is laſt ſhall be firſt.* When that proverb ſhall be taken up over you; *How are thou fallen from heaven, O Luciſer ſon of the morning*, when ſatan by his tail ſhal draw gliſteringStars down out of heaven towards the earth, &we think,this woful evil of propoſing our ſelvesas the end of our devotions, doth not only obſtruct this grace, but likewiſe when we attain to it in ſome meaſure,it breaks it off.

It is certain that when a chriſtian hath moſt nearneſs with God , and is in a manner, lifted up to the third heavens, then he doth receive great liberty of expreſſions, winning to ſome high and eminent conceptions of God, and ſome ſignificant expreſſions of his own miſery, then our pride cauſing us to reflect upon what we have ſpoken,do much quench our holy flame of zeal and love: we ſtudy to have expreſſions in our memory, that we may expreſs them when we come abroad,rather than affections in the heart:and this hath obſtructed many chriſtians of precious enjoyments,& doth prove this eminently to you, that ye are more taken up with the expreſſions of your enjoyments,than with the enjoyments of themſelves.

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We confeſs there are ſome who are more rude and groſs in their carriage,who go about this exerciſe of prayer , that they may take advantage to ſin with more liberty, and with fewer challenges,like that adulterous woman mentioned in *Prov.* 7. 14,18. who after that ſhe ſaid, ſhe had peace-offerings with her, and that ſhe had payed her vows,ſhe inferreth this, *That ſhe would go and take her fill of loves, and ſolace her ſelf to the morning.* Your prayers, O Atheiſts are always an abomination in the ſight of the Lord , O how much more , when ye bring them with ſuch a wicked mind! How will you hide your ſins with ſuch a covering. O take heed to your ſpirits,leſt ye deal treacherouſly with God. There are many of us that prayes like Saints, but we walk like devils. Surely one that heard us pray,might propheſie good things of us , but in our liſe may find our propheſies fail in the accompliſhment.

There is a ſecond *impediment* that obſtructs a chriſtians liberty in the exerciſe of Prayer , in his ſecret retirements, which is that woful formality and indifferency of ſpirit that we uſe in the exerciſe of our ſecret prayers, the moſt part of us are ignorant what it is to *cry mightily to God* when we are alone , and to *wreſtle with him , were it until the dawning of the day,till he bleſs us,that ſo we may indeed be Princes with God*; that by theſe two hands we may lay hold on him,Faith and Love, Love lays hold on the heart of Chriſt, and Faith lays hold on his Word, and by it detains him in his galleries. I may ſpeak this to the ſhame of many of you , that it were your advantage to be as ſerious in ſpeaking to God when ye are alone, as ye are ſerious when ye are in company. A heathen did obſerve this, and therefore did preſs it upon all to whom he wrote, that they ſhould beware of woful indifferency : and we confeſs this woful indifferency of ours , is but an involving our ſelves

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in that curse. *Cursed be the man that hath in his flock a male, and voweth & sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing.* O what if precious Christ should propose that unanswerable challenge to many of us who are here, *Are the consolations of God small to you?* Or is there any secret thing with you, that ye do so little pursue after these things? We confess, our formality, and woful indifferency, doth much proceed either from the want of a solid impression of a deity, before whom we pray, or else from the want of a spiritual conviction of the absolute necessity of these things that we pray for. Ye formalists, whose constant practice is to be formal, by your formality ye make your bonds stronger upon your spirits, and do wreath the yoke of your transgressions round about your necks. These impertinent rovings of spirit that we have in the exercise of Prayer, doth, no doubt, come from this fountain of woful formality that we have in it, *Fowls do with liberty descend upon the carcasses*, when we are formal, and it is only fervency *that must drive these away.*

The third impediment that obstructs a Christians liberty; we are not much taken up in imploying of the holy Ghost that must help our infirmities, and must breath upon our withered spirits, otherwise such dead bones as we are cannot live; *Our bodily exercise profiteth little, it is the spirit that quickneth*, as is clear, *Joh* 3. 5. and certainly, except *the north or south wind blow, our spices cannot flow out: and except the Angel move the water, we cannot step in and be healed.* O but that word is a mystery to our practice which is in the 20. *verse* of the Epi. of *Jude*, stand surely, we may be astonished when we read it over, & we may be ashamed that we are so little in the real practice of it) where this is put in amongst the midst of all the Christians duties, that we should *pray in the holy Ghost*: & certainly, that duty is required of us, although it be a mystery, & an unknown thing to the practice of the most

most part of the Christians of this generation. I think a Christian that is much in the imployment of the holy Ghost, when he goeth to pray, he is put to an holy *non plus*, so that he knoweth not what he shall say, & is oftimes put without any complement to propose that desire to God, *Lord teach us what we shall say for we cannot order our speech before thee, by reason of our darkness.* Think ye not that Peter, *James*, and *John* had the spirit of prayer eminently above us all, and yet they were not ashamed to propose that desire to God, *Lord teach us to pray?* It were for your concernment and advantage, to pray even as though ye had never prayed before. I am perswaded of it, that if this exercise of prayer were so gone about, we should have much more liberty of words, and of expressions then we have: It is certain we must have no confidence in our gifts and abilities of prayer. The prayers that are penned in heaven, are best heard in heaven. That which the holy Ghost doth dite (with reverence be it spoken) the Father can best read. The Father can read no characters of any petition (to admit it) but that which his blessed hands doth pen.

There is this fourth impediment and obstruction which obstructs a Christians liberty and access to God in his secret retirements and prayers. That we are so little taken up in the imploying of Jesus Christ as a Mediator in our approaches unto God, I think it is impossible for a Christian to delight & enjoy himself with God, but through Jesus Christ, who is *that vine of peace.* O Christians, through what door will ye enter into the *Holiest of all*, if ye enter not through him, even through Jesus Christ, the vail of his flesh? In a manner, he is the door of heaven, and we must enter into heaven through the door. Christ is that great Courtier in heaven, by whom we must have access & permission unto the King. If any person dare adventure to go to pray without him (*who is that blessed*

days-man betwixt God and sinners) he comes without his wedding garment, & so that question shall be proposed to him; *Friend how camest thou hither?* Or rather, *O enemy, how camest thou hither without a wedding garment?* And be perswaded of it, that ye shall remain speechless, not opening your mouth.

The fifth impediment and obstruction which obstructs a Christians liberty and access to God in his secret retirements, is the woful entanglements and ingagements of heart that we have to the impertinent vanities and trifles, that we have of this passing world; our hearts are mightily taken up with the perishing and decaying things that are in this life; yea, the most part of our hearts are married to the world, and to the things thereof, and we think, and are perswaded of it, that that doth exceedingly obstruct and mar our liberty and access to God. This Divinity was well known to godly *David*, *Psal.* 66. 18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear my prayer*, hearing and access, although they be not much different, yet always the last presupposeth the first: and this Divinity was also well known unto that blessed man that is spoken of in *John* 9. 31. *And this we know, that God heareth not sinners, but if any man be a worshipper of God, and obeyeth his will, him he heareth*, I think those woful and dreadful evils that doth so easily beset us, doth exceedingly hinder and obstruct us to ascend in a spiritual cloud of divine & holy affection unto God; the souls of the most part of us are divided amongst many, even amongst so many lovers, that it cannot devote and resign it self to God; every impertinent idol and lust doth claim a right and relation unto the soul, and then that obstructs a Christians liberty in his secret retirements. O to be more in the exercise of this precious and excellent grace of Faith, whereby we may purifie our selves from *all uncleanness of the flesh, and of the spirit, and may be able to perfect holiness in the fear*

fear of the Lord. O can it be that such a fountain, that such a defiled and corrupt fountain that sends forth only salt water, can send forth any sweet, precious and soul-refreshing springs of living water? This was a mystery and a paradox unto the Apostle *James* in his *chap.* 3. 12. *Can fig-trees bear olive berries? Or can an olive tree bear figs? So can no fountain yield salt water and fresh*, and certainly it shal always remain impossible for us to do both good and evil. Would ye know the livery which the Church of Christ must have, and her members? It is to be cloathed with holiness; for, no doubt, that is the robe and garment with which we must enter into the Holiest of all: and may not that incite and provoke your desires to follow after it which is so excellent and precious? Believe it, we are not able to tell the worth of it.

There is this sixth impediment which obstructs a Christians liberty and access to God in his secret prayer, and it is that woful resisting and quenching of the motions of the spirit, that oftentimes we fall into: hence it is, that when a Christian doth go unto God, he is debarred, and his prayers is shut out from God; and the reason of it is, because he debarred God before: And this is remarkably clear from the Brides practice, *Cant.* 5. 2. compared with the following verses, she held Christ at the door, notwithstanding his *locks were wet with the dew of the night, and his hair with the drops of the morning.* But when she had condescended to open to him, he had withdrawn himself from her. O, who would hold out such a precious guest? surely it were a more suitable exercise for us, that we should admire and wonder and stand astonished at his low condescension, that ever he should have condescended so low as to come unto us, rather then to require that marvellous and unsearchable grace of his towards us, after such a way as many of us so sinfully do.

There

There is this laſt impediment that hinders Chriſtians liberty and acceſs to God in his ſecret prayers, and it is that woful evil of pride wherewith we are cloathed ſo much in our approches to God, we ought *to bow our heads ſeven times towards the ground*, when we begin to make our approaches unto him, even unto him who is greater then all the kings of the earth: believe it, if the grace of humility were more our exerciſe in ſecret prayer, certainly we ſhould enjoy more of him then we do. This is clear in 1 *Pet.* 5. 5, 6. where he ſaith, *God giveth grace to the humble, but he reſiſteth the proud.* And it is likewiſe clear from *Iſa.* 57. 15. though he be that high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, and whoſe Name is holy, yet he ſaith, *I dwell in the high and holy place, with him alſo that is of a humble and contrite ſpirit, to revive the ſpirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.* And although he be that high and holy One, he loveth one that is of a pure and contrite ſpirit. O might we not always ſay, that we are not worthy that thou ſhould even condeſcend ſo far *as to come under our roof*? Modeſty and Reverence might make us admire ſuch wonderful and precious viſits, *whence is it*, ſaith *Elizabeth, that the mother of my Lord ſhould come to me?* Much more may we ſay, whence is it that our Lord himſelf ſhould come to us? We may challenge our ſelves, that our enjoyments of God are not more then they are.

Now we ſhall ſpeak, ſecondly, a little to you (before we ſhut up our diſcourſe) how a Chriſtian may be helped after his enjoyments in prayer (and after he hath been admitted to taſte of *that pure river that runs out from beneath the throne of God*) to reſt in his love to Chriſt, and not to ſtir him up, nor awake him, before he pleaſe. We confeſs, it is as much difficulty (if not more) to maintain communion with God, when it is gained, as to gain it when it is loſt. Oh, but Satan

tan hath oftentimes catched much advantage over the people of God, after their enlargements. When was it that *John* fell down to worſhip the angel? was it not when he had *ſeen the Bride, the Lambs wife adorned*? as is clear, *Rev.* 19. 10. compared with the preceeding verſes: and it is clear again from *Johns* practice, *Rev.* 22. 9. compared with the foregoing words; and when was it that the diſciples did rove, not knowing what they ſpake? was it not when they were on mount *Tabor*, and did ſee the faſhion of his face change before him? *Mat.* 17. 2, 4, 6. Though we confeſs we muſt give an indulgence unto that, it was nothing but the rovings of holy love that made them to do ſo, which, alace, is not much heard in theſe days; we rove in a more impertinent manner. And we think a Chriſtian after his enjoyments and enlargements, ought eſpecially to ſtand on his watch, and to *pray, leſt he enter into temptation*: for the ſtroak that he doth receive after enjoyments and enlargements, is one of the moſt diſcouraging ſtroaks, and moſt anxious that he meeteth with; it hath been the occaſion of much misbelief, and hath made his own to mourn, not only over the foundation, but alſo even to raze it down; arguing thus with themſelves, if that when Chriſt was preſent with them, upon whom their ſtrength was laid, they were led captive unto their luſt, *Rom.* 7. 23. how much more ſhall they be led captive with them when Chriſt ſhall be ablent and away; they have been put to draw that concluſion, *One day ſhall I fall by the hand of ſome of mine enemies.* We ſhould guard againſt ſuch a ſtroak, becauſe it doth always almoſt make the Chriſtian call in queſtion the reality of his enjoyments. It is hard for a Chriſtian to receive a ſtroak by the hand of his iniquities after enlargements, and not preſently to call in queſtion the reality of them; yea more to call in queſtion his eſtate in grace, for they do often de-

with themselves: *if it had been he who visited me, would he not have enabled me to sing a new song of triumph over my lusts* : And also ye would guard against it, because it is one of the most dishonourable indignities and affronts that can be put upon precious Christ: and if there were no more to provoke you to guard against it, may it not be sufficient unto you, that that stroak which ye have received by your iniquities after your enlargements and enjoyments of God, if it be by your own consent (believe it, and be perswaded of it) that in a manner, it saith this much unto you, that ye have preferred an idol and lust even to Jesus Christ? We think the Jews preferring *Barrabas* before Christ, when the crown of thorns was upon his head, and when he was spitted upon and buffeted, is it not such an indignity and disgrace that ye put upon him, when ye prefer your lusts and idols unto him, even when he is appearing with a crown of glory and majesty unto you, & a rob of righteousness and of joy? O dare ye even in his presence prefer any thing before him? Might not Angels, and the souls of just men made now perfect, & all that are round about the Throne, might not they all take up that lamentation over you; *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise.* And we think there are these three woful evils that readily befals a Christian after enlargements and enjoyments that he meets with.

There is this first evil of security, *Can.* 5. 2. compared with the first verse, where Christ when he was come into his garden, *and had gathered his myrrhe with his spices, and had eaten his hony comb with his hony, and had drunken his wine with his milk*; And yet for all these enjoyments the Spouse was sleeping: As likewise in *Zech.* 4. 1. compared with the preceeding Chapter, where the Prophet fell asleep after his enjoyments, *until the Angel came and awaked him.* Ah, we readily sleeep in the bed of love! and that hath

hath impeded many excellent visits we might have. O what a visit was that of the Spouse, *Cant.* 5. 2. we may question whether ever she got such an one while she was here below.

And secondly, that woful evil of pride, as is certainly presupposed in 2 *Cor.* 12. 7. where, lest *Paul should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of revelations, there is a messenger of Satan sent to buffet him.* O, but it is a dangerous exercise for a Christian to search his own glory. We confess we do not search to strengthen our own confidence, or our love; but to add oyl to that fire of pride in our reflections upon our selves : *The wind doth lift us upon its wings, and we ride upon it till our substance be dissolved.*

And there is that third *evil* which is not so obvious, but, no doubt, doth oftentimes befal the Christian, and that is self-love, which oftentimes he falleth into after his enjoyments, and this evil certainly doth break off many of our enjoyments, to the disadvantage of the Christian, and hinders him to exercise himself in the grace of true love, which always we ought to be keeping in exercise, because it is that oyl by which our chariot-wheels must move swifter, and be as the *chariots of Aminadab.*

Now for that which we proposed, *viz.* how a Christian may be helped to keep his enjoyments which he hath attained to by prayer? We shall only propose these two things, 1. Be much in the exercise of watchfulness after your enlargements, *that ye enter not into temptation.* And 2. Be much in the exercise of humility, that when grace lifts you up, you may not lift your selves. O, but a Christian that walketh always with his feet towards the earth, and doth never mount an hand broad above it, he walketh most safely. I know nothing to keep your enjoyments

in life,& to keep you from snares in your enjoyments so much,as the grace of humility: but we need not insist long in telling you how he shall maintain your injoyments; there are, alace,so few of them in these days: When were ye in Heaven? or when was Heaven brought down to you, in a manner. If the most part of us did now behold Christ, we would not know him, it is so long since we saw him. O precious Christ, how much is he undervalued in these days? I think if such a supposition as this were possible, that if Christ would go down to the pit to those damned persons that are reserved in everlasting chains, and preach that doctrine unto them, *Here am I, receive me, and ye shall obtain life*, we question whether obedience or admiration would be more their exercise: Would they not bind that command as a chain of gold about their neck? But know it, ye that refuse him now,ere long he shall refuse you. Oh, when shall that precious promise that is in *Zech.* 8. 21. be accomplished, *And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord,and to seek the Lord of Hosts: I will go also?* Or as the Word may be rendered, *continually.* O! When shall such a voice be heard in this City of *Glasgow*? Seeing our brethren above sing without ceasing, let us *pray without ceasing*: And to you that prayes, I shall say this word, ye that fervently pray without ceasing, it is not long before ye shall sing without ceasing, and without all interruption.

SERMON III.

1 Thess. 5. 17. *Pray without ceasing.*

REal godliness is so intire and undivided a thing, and the parts of it are so inseparably knit, and ed one with another and cannot be parted, that it

it is like *Christs coat that was without seam, that it could not be divided*; and except the whole fall to us by divine lot,we can have no part nor portion in it: and were this more solidly believed & imprinted upon our hearts; the inseparable connexion and near cognition that is amongst all the graces of the Spirit, we should not be so partial and divided in our pursuits after them, *separating those things which he hath joyned together*, which oftentimes is the occasion that our nakedness and deformity doth appear: neither should we (if this were believed) be so soon satisfied with our attainments; (but in a manner)should be entertaining an holy oblivion and forgetfulness of all that we have purchased and put by our hand, and should be *passing forward to those things that are before, till once we attain to that stature of one in Christ.* And till grace have its perfect work, and want nothing, we can never be constant. Amongst all the graces of the spirit which a Christian ought vigorously to pursue after,this grace of prayer is not amongst the least: it is that which keepeth all the graces of a Christian in life and vigor, *and maketh us fat and flourishing, and bringing forth fruit in our old age*: and except the Christian be planted by that Wall, his Branches will never climb over the Wall who is the Christian that groweth like *a palm tree,and doth flourish as the cedar in Lebanon? Is not he that is planted in the house of the Lord,which is a house of prayer*: And we conceive that the foundamental cause [illegible] & the real exercise of godliness is under such a [illegible] and remarkable a decay in these days, it is want of obedience unto this great Commandment; *Pray without ceasing.* Were we dwelling *fourty days in the Mount with God,our faces should shine,and we should be constrained to cast a vail over them.* Were we entertaining a holy and divine correspondency with heaven by this messenger of prayer, we might be [illegible]

sting of the first fruits of that land affar off Prayer is one of these faithful messengers & spies which a Christian sends forth to view the promised land, & which always doth bring up a good report upon that excellent and glorious land. O when went ye to the brook *Eschol* by the exercise of prayer, and did cut down a branch with a cluster of grapes, and were admitted to behold that land, which is the glory of all lands; in the midst of which doth grow that *tree of life which bears twelve manner of fruits every year*? O what a land suppose you it to be, wherein are twelve harvests every year? Alace, we are straitned in our desires, which makes us straitned in our enjoyments. May not we blush and be ashamed that the men of the world should enlarge their desires, as hell and as death, and shall cry, *Give, give*, after these passing and transient vanities of the World, and that Christians should not be provoked to enlarge their desires as heaven, and as *the sand by the sea shore*, after these things that are more high and divine in their nature, and are more fruitful and advantagious in their enjoyments? we think ignorance is the cause of our slow pursuit after these things, and ignorance in men of the world is the occasion of their swift and vigorous pursuit after these endless and passing vanities of this vain and transient world.

We did at the last occasion (speaking upon these words) speak somewhat to that which doth obstruct a christians liberty in his secret retirements and conversing with God, so that the door of access is oftentimes shut upon him, & he hath not the dignity conferred upon him to enter into the *Holiest of all*.

We spake likewise to that which was the best and most compendious way to maintain fellowship and communion with God after once it is attained, that is, our hearts are enlarged, we may keep our spirit in a tender and spiritual frame, we shall now in the next

next place speak a little to you, how a Christian may be helped to know the reality of his enjoyments, whether they be delusions, yea, or not; or tokens and significations of the Lords special and singular respect: and before we speak of that, we shall premise these two things.

First, that a man which hath but a common work of the spirit, and hath never been indued with real & saving Grace, he may attain to many flashes of the spirit, and some tastings *of the powers of the world to come*, as likewise to the receiving of the Word of the Gospel with joy, as is clear from *Heb.* 6. 5. and *Mat.* 13. 20. He may have many things that looks like the most heavenly and spiritual enjoyments of a Christian, but we conceive that the enjoyments of these that have but a common work of the spirit, they are not of such a measure and degree, as the enjoyments of the sincere Christian: hence they are called in *Heb.* 6. 5. but a tasting; the Word is sometimes used for such a tasting, as when one goeth to a merchant to buy liquor, he doth receive somewhat to taste, to teach him to buy, but that is far fom the word which is in *Ps.* 36. 8. *They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house: and thou shalt make them drink of the rivers of thy pleasures*, And from the word which is in *Cant.* 5. 1. *Eat and drink abundantly, O beloved*, we conceive likewise that their enlargements and enjoyments which they have, the strength and vigor of their corruptions are not much abated thereby; neither is conformity with God attained: hence is that word, *Mat.* 13. 20. Though they received the word with joy; yet the thorns (which we do understand to be corruptions) they do grow without any opposition; & that never knew what it was to have the strength & vigor of their lusts abated by their enjoyments, they have but a common work of the spirit. The Hypocrites enlargements are rather in publick, and in their conversings

one with another, than in their secret retirements: and those enjoyments that they have when they converse one with another, they do rather joy and rejoyce because of applause that they have by such enlargments, and of a reputation of having familiarity & intimatness with God, rather than for the enjoyments themselves; and that dignity and honour hath been conferred upon them to taste somewhat of that River that flows from beneath the throne of God, we conceive likewise, that in all their enjoyments that they have, they do not much study & endeavour to guard against all obstruction & impediments that may stir up Christ, and awake him before he please; they can give their hearts a latitude to rove abroad after impertinent vanities, yea presently after the seeming access & communion with God, as likewise their desires to the exercise of prayer, and christian duties is not much increased by their enlargements which they receive being strangers, in that word which is in *Pr.* 10. 23. *The way of the Lord is strength to the upright, &c.*

That which secondly we shall speak of, (before we come to speak how a Christian may be helped to know the reality of his enjoyments) is this, that there is an enlargement of gifts, which is far from the enlargement of the spirit and of grace. There may be much liberty of words and of expressions where there is not much liberty of affections. We think it is a frequent delusion amongst his own, that they conceive their liberty of their expressing of themselves in prayer, is enlargement: but we are perswaded of this, that there may be much of this, and not much of the spirit, and of the grace of prayer (as we told before) The spirit of prayer is sometimes an impediment to words, so that a Christian which hath much of that, may have least of volubility and of expression.

But first, (these enjoyments that are real) which indeed

deed are significations of his love and respect to you, they do exceedingly move and humble the Christian, and causeth him to walk low in his own estimation; Hence is that word 2 *Sam.* 7. 18, 19. where *David* being under such a load of love, that (in a manner) he is forced to sit down and cannot stand; He doth subjoyn that expression, *Who am I, O Lord? and what is my house that thou hast brought me hitherto?* and also in *Job* 42. 5, 6. where that enjoyment which *Job* had of God, *as to see him with the seeing of the eye* (a sight not frequent in those days) He subjoyns a strange inference from so divine promises, *Therefore, I abhor my self in dust and ashes.* And in *Isai.* 6. 5. compared with the preceeding verses, where *Isaiah* from that clear discovery of God; as to see him in his Temple, he is constrained to cry forth, *wo is me, I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips.* It were our advantage, that when we are lifted up to the third heavens, were it to hear words that are unspeakable, yet to cover our upper lip, and cry, *unclean, unclean*; we ought always to sit nearer the dust, the more that grace doth exalt us to heaven: and we conceive that it is a most excellent way to keep our selves in life after our enjoyments, to be walking humbly with God, and to know that the root beareth us, and not we the root, christian enlargments that are real, hath this effect upon them; It doth provoke to a more constant exercise of pursuing after God; their diligence is enlarged when they are enlarged: hence is that word, *Psal.* 116. 2. *Because God hath inclined his heart unto me* (which presupposeth access) *therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.* It is certain, that if our enjoyments be real, they will be well improven, for this is a sweet fruit which doth always accompany them.

2. Ye may likewise know the reality of your enjoyments by your endeavours to remove al impediments

and obstruction that may interrupt your fellowship & correspondence with God, according to that word, *Cant.* 3. 5. When after the Church did behold him who had been so long absent, she is put to this, I *charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up nor awake my beloved till he please*, I conceive this is one of the most certain demonstrations of the reality of enjoyments, when you are to put more carefulness and solicitude to have all things taken out of the way that may provoke him to go away and quench his holy spirit. O! but it is a marvelous undervaluing of the grace of Jesus Christ to take such a latitude to our selves after we have been enlarged.

3. Ye may likewise know the reality of your enjoyments by this, when ye do attain conformity with God by your enjoyments: hence is that word, 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. *Whom beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, were changed into the same Image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* Our corruptions must be abated, if we would prove the reality of our enjoyments: for if we give them that compleat latitude which they have had before, we have reason to be suspitious and jealous of our selves: and we shall say this, do not rest upon all your enjoyments that ye have here within time, as satisfactory, but let them rather provoke your appetite, then suffice your desires and longings. That holy man *David* knew of no beginning of satisfaction, but when eternity should come; according to that word, *Psal.* 17. 15. *When* I *awake* (that is, in the blessed morning of the resurrection) *then I shall be satisfied with thy likeness.* Did *David* never find satisfaction here below? All that he did receive, was but the streames that did flow from that immense and profound fountain and sea of love; He did drink of the brook, while he was here below; but when he was above, he was drowned in that immense sea of

of love, and there was abundantly satisfied. O let the streames lead you to the fountain; and when ye are win there, ye may sit down and pen your songs of everlasting praise: these are but of *the valley of Achor, which must be a door of hope*, to have more entire and full enjoyment of him.

That which thirdly we shall speak to, shall be to those advantages which a Christian may have by the exercise of prayer, we may say this unto you, *Come and see*, can best resolve the question; for those spiritual advantages which a Christian may have in the real and spiritual discharge of this duty they are better felt nor told. It is impossible sometimes for a Christian to make language of these precious and excellent things that he meets with in sincere and serious prayer.

The first advantage, It doth keep all the graces of the spirit eminently in exercise, it maketh them vigorous and green: it keeps the grace of love most lively, for one that is much in the exercise of prayer, he doth receive so many notable discoveries and manifestations of the sweetness & glory of God, & most rich participations of that unspeakable delight which is to be found in him, that he is constrained to cry forth, *who would not love him who is the King of Saints?* O, when met ye with such an enjoyment of God in prayer, this? Did ye conceive that ye were cloathed with impossibility to love him too much? Or to love him he ought to be loved? And when did ye conceive that it was an absurd opinion, that he could be loved too much? Hence these two are conjoyned together, *Rejoice evermore*, and *pray without ceasing*. And what is joy, but a fruit of love; or rather an immense measure of love? We confess, it is a question that is difficult to determine whether prayer or faith doth keep up love most in exercise? We think love (which foundation is upon sense) is most kept in exercise in prayer: hence it is when we are straitned in

exerciſe of that duty, and when he turns *about the face of his Throne*, then love begins to languiſh and decay, and then that excellent grace of Faith doth ſtep in and ſpeak thus to love: *wait on God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him, who is the health of my countenance and my God.* Faith can read love in his heart, when ſenſe cannot read love in his hands nor in his Face: but when he ſeemeth to frown, or to ſtrike; Faith can make ſuch a noble expoſition on ſuch a diſpenſation; *I know the thoughts of his heart, they are thoughts of peace, and not of war, to give me an expected end.*

Prayer doth likewiſe keep the grace of mortification eminently in exerciſe; Would ye know what is the reaſon that our corruptions do ſing ſo many ſongs of triumph over us, and are ſo much led captive by them according to their will? Is it not the want of the exerciſe of ſecret prayer, and that we are not much taken up in the imploying of the Angel that muſt bind the old ſerpent, the Devil, as is mentioned, *Rev.* 20. 1. that hath the great chain on his hand. Hence *Paul* when his corruptions were awakned, and ſtirring within him, he knew no weapon ſo ſuitable for them as Prayer, as is clear from 2 *Cor.* 12. 7, 8. where the Meſſenger of Satan was ſent to buffet him: It is ſaid, *That he beſought the Lord thrice that this might depart from him.* And our bleſſed Lord Jeſus (ſpeaking of the caſting out of a Devil) ſaith, *Matth.* 17. 21. *This kind goeth not out, but by faſting and prayer.* It is no wonder that oftentimes we are led captive by our own iniquities, and our lusts and our corruptions mocking at our profeſſion, and ſcorning ſuch weak and feeble builders, as we are, ſay to us, *Can ſuch feeble Jews as theſe are, build ſtately and glorious buildings in one day?* But who are much in this exerciſe of this duty: and unto your own approbations doth not receive ſuch victory over your lusts, which maketh you often-

oftentimes cry forth, *It is in vain for me to ſeek the Almighty, and what profit is there that I pray unto him?* (We confeſs, the ſmall ſucceſs that a chriſtian hath, when he doth diſcharge this duty of prayer, doth ſometimes conſtrain him to draw that concluſion, I *will pray no more.*) We think the ſmall victory that ye obtain over your luſts, and the little increaſe in the work of mortification, may proceed from the want of that divine fervency and holy fervour that we ought to have in your propoſing your deſire unto God, *the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous availeth much* as *James* ſaith, *chap.* 5 16. If we want fervency in our proponing our deſires unto God, it is no wonder that we want ſucceſs; or likewiſe, it may proceed from our want of Faith, our miſbelief giving the return of our prayers before we begin to pray, and ſaying this unto us, *Though we call, he will not anſwer*; but as *James* ſaith, *chap.* 5. 19. *The prayer of Faith may ſave you who are ſick*, and may raiſe you up, ſo *whatſoever ye aſk in prayer believing, ye ſhall receive it.* And it doth ſometimes proceed from the love and great reſpect that God hath to you, deſiring that your wounds may be always bleeding, that ſo ye may alwayes keep about his Throne. Is it not known that if our neceſſities were away, we ſhould abridge and inch much of our ſecret devotions to God? In a manner, neceſſity is that chain whereby God binds the feet of his own to his Throne, he deſireth that they ſhould be away, and therefore they halt that they may rely on his ſtrength to bear them.

Prayer doth likewiſe keep the grace of patience (under our moſt ſad and cruſhing diſpenſations) eminently in exerciſe, would ye know the moſt commodious way to make you to poſſeſs your ſouls in patience under great troubles? Then be much in the exerciſe of the grace of prayer; Hence is that word *James* 5. 13. *If any man be afflicted let him pray,*

James 5. 13. *If any man be afflicted let him pray*, &c. And what made *Paul* and *Silas* to ſing in the priſon, and ſo patiently to endure the croſs? was it not this, *They were praying at midnight*, *Act.* 16. 25. Certainly one that hath attained to much divine ſubmiſſion & holy enjoyments in the begetting of their croſs, they have been much in the exerciſe of prayer. Did ye never know (any of you) what ſuch a thing as this meaned, that going to complain of your anxiety to God, you have been conſtrained to forget them, & begin to bleſs and praiſe him, becauſe he hath ſtopped the mouths of your complaints, and hath put a more divine and heavenly exerciſe in your hand? This the *Pſalmiſt* did attain to in in *Pſalm* 89. where the ſcope of the Pſalm will bear, that he was going to complain of the miſery of the Church, and of himſelf, yet before ever he began to propone a complaint to God, he ſpent to the 38. *verſe* in praiſing of him. Sometimes Chriſtians have been conſtrained to cry forth, *It is better to be in the houſe of mourning, than in the houſe of mirth*: and to reſolve not to fret *to be put in a fierie furnace, hot ſeven times more than ordinary*, if they have in the furnace *one like the Son of God to walk with them.*

Prayer, doth likewiſe keep the grace of Faith emi-dly in exerciſe. O! but Faith (which is one of myſteries of godlineſs) doth much languiſh and y in us through the want of prayer! It is impoſ- for a Chriſtian to believe except he be much in exereiſe of prayer; we may maintain a vain hope perſwaſion: but that ſpiritual exerciſe of Faith not be kept in life without that holy exereiſe of er: hence it is that prayer, when Faith is begin- decay, doth go to God, and cry forth, *Lord I e, help my unbelief.* And we conceive there are three grounds and golden pillars of Faith, on it doth lean, which prayer doth oftentimes ad-

miniſter and give unto it. Firſt, there is that golden foundation, *The faithfulneſs of God*, which prayer doth abundantly make evident to the Chriſtian: hence when a Chriſtian doth pray according to his Promiſe, and doth receive a return of his prayer, he doth receive a demonſtration of the faithfulneſs of God, which is a pillar on which Faith doth lean. Prayer doth likewiſe give unto Faith this ſecond pillar, which is the evidence and demonſtration of the goodneſs of God. O! but one that is much taken up in the exerciſe of the grace of Prayer, what large and eminent diſcoveries of God doth he receive, he oftentimes diſappoints their fears, and overcomes their hopes and expectations: he doth not regulate our enjoyments according to our deſires: but he doth regulate them according to that divine and moſt bleſſed rule, his own good will and pleaſure, and, O bleſſed are we in this that it is ſo! And thirdly, Prayer doth likewiſe furniſh to Faith, experience, which is a Pillar on which Faith muſt lean; that which maketh the Chriſtian have ſo ſmall experience, is want of the ſerious and conſtant exerciſe of prayer. O, but what he frowneth, we might have many things to ſupply our ſelves, if we were much in the ſerious exercise of this Duty of prayer. And truely if we had the three pillars, our prayers would not return empty.

Now the ſecond advantage that a Chriſtian doth reap by the exerciſe of prayer, is, he is admitted in this duty to moſt intimate and familiar correſpondence with God. Did ye never know what it is to behold him who is inviſible in the exerciſe of this duty? Did ye ever know what theſe large and heavenly communications of his love doth mean? prayer is the divine channel through which that river of conſolation (that *maketh glad the City of God*) doth run. When was it that *Cornelius* did ſee a man ſtand

white apparel? was it not when he was praying, and when was it that *Daniel* did meet with the Angel? was it not when he was in the exercise of prayer, and offering up his evening Oblation to God? O for communion and fellowship with God, (which is so rare and singular in these days) were the sweetness of it believed, we should be more frequent and constant in the pursuit of it. I confess and wonder, that we are not put to debate oftentimes whether there be such a thing as communion and fellowship with him, we do so little enjoy it. What happiness (O beloved of the Lord, if so I dare call you) have ye, which doth so much satisfie you, that when your eternal happiness is clearly holden forth before your face, yet ye do so much undervalue it? Surely this perswasion cometh not from him who hath called you. I think, if Angels and the souls of just men now made perfect (if I may so speak) if they were admitted to behold that wonderful undervaluing of communion and fellowship with God that is amongst the Christians of this generation; O how might they stand and wonder at us? They would think it a paradox and mystery, to behold any undervaluing of him who can never be overvalued. Would ye not blush and be ashamed, if he should imbrace you, ye have so much undervalued him? I know no thing that a Christian shall be so much ashamed of, when he shall behold that noble *Plant of Renown*, as the low and undervaluing conceptions and apprehensions that he hath had of him. If in heaven there were a latitude for us to pray, we should pray that prayer (when our feet shall stand within the threshold of the gate of our everlasting rest) *Pardon us for undervaluing of thee, O precious Christ.*

The third advantage which a Christian hath in the exercise of prayer, is this, It is that duty by which we must attain to the accomplishment of the promises

ses. Though God be most free in giving of the promises, yet he will be supplicated for the accomplishment of them, this is clear in *Ezech.* 36. 37. where in the preceeding words, there is named and holden forth large and precious promises, yet he subjoyneth, *Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them,* &c. This is likewise clear, 2 *Sam.* 7. 27. where *David* receiving the promise that his house should be established for ever, and that the Messiah should come out of his loins (according to the flesh) he maketh that sweet fruit of it: *Therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.* Is not this a mystery to turn over your promises into prayer, and your prayers into songs of praises? It is no wonder that we oftentimes complain, *that his word doth fail for evermore,* because ye are not much in the exercise of that duty, which must bring the accomplishment of these things that he hath promised.

The fourth and last advantage that a christian doth receive by the exercise of prayer, it is the most compendious and excellent way to resist temptations that assault us. We spake before of mortifying of corruptions when once they have seised upon us, and that is a notable way to mortifie them by prayer: this is likewise an advantage, that when temptations begin to assault us: then we should go to our knees for relief: and I conceive, if a messenger of Satan were sent to buffet us, we might be constrained to *pray without ceasing.* Hence Jesus Christ who knew what was the best and most effectual remedy to resist temptations, he giveth this remedy of prayer, *Mat.* 26. 14. *Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.*

Now we shall shut up our discourse, by speaking a little to the last thing we intended to speak of at this

occasion, and it is how a Christian may be helped to walk suitably as he ought, under his spiritual bonds and straits. We confess, it is one of the most hard and difficult tasks in Christianity, for a person to walk with divine submission under his publick bonds, that when God (in the depth of his unsearchable wisdom) hath thought fit to draw a vail over his face, to subscribe that truth, *He hath done all things well.* We confess God hath these precious designs in such a dispensation, as that he may first hide pride from our eyes, and that we may be taught to walk humbly with him. O, but if we were always enlarged in our publick conversing one with another, how would we esteem of our selves above measure, and begin to undervalue these persons that are not thus kindly dealt with by God? Hence is it that he always mixeth our wine with our water; he knoweth that the pouring in of such precious liquor, these bruckle vessels of ours could not contain it.

He hath this design likewise in such a dispensation that we may be put to the sweet exercise of the grace of prayer; in a word, that we may be constant and serious in that duty. We conceive, if some liberty of words and enlargements in publick were granted us, we would abridge and come short in our private devotions. It is the great scope and main drift of some to seem great in the Kingdom of heaven amongst men; though they be least in the estimation of Christ, *who is that faithful and true witness.*

And there is this design likewise in such a dispensation, and it is that we may be convinced of our folly, and of the atheism, and pride of our hearts, that we can rise up from secret prayer, and yet never have any serious thoughts about it; but in our publick straits and bonds. O, how can we mourn and repine, and we confess, we think these repinings doth rather proceed from this, that we think that gourd of worldly ap-

plause is now beginning to wither over us, and therefore we cry forth, *it is better for us to dy then live,* then from this, *want of the presence of Jesus Christ, and the participation of his sweetness*; which we may most strongly convince you of by this, is it not sometimes so with you, that under your publick bonds when ye have been most remarkably straitned within your selves, yet if your hearts have not conceived evil of you, but have testified their satisfaction; doth not your sorrow then decay, and there is no more repining thereat?

Now we think the best and most compendious way for a Christian to bear such a dispensation (as to attain to a divine submission to Christ in all things, and to leave our complaints upon our selves) is this; We should study much the vanity of our popular applause, what an empty and transient a thing it is. I confess I would wish no greater misery to any than to seek and to have it. We think it is misery enough to have it; but certainly they walk safest and most secure that cares not for it. Hence a Heathen said well to this purpose, *Qui bene latuit bene vixit: He that lurks well, lives well.* I would likewise have you much taken up in the consideration how ye have great disadvantage by your repinings and murmurings which ye have against his dispensations, in straitning you in publick. O Christians, doth not your repinings incapacitate and indispose you for the going about the exercise of secret prayer? Doth not your repinings under your publick bonds, make your bonds strong upon your spirits? I confess, a Christian may contract and draw on moe fetters and bonds by one hours repining against such dispensations, than he is able to shake off for many days: and when ye are repining against such dispensations, that ye have to do with; doth not your lusts and corruptions stir and awake within you? Surely they then prevail, as we say,

ſay, *nullo contradicente*, nothing ſtanding in oppoſition againſt them to our apprenenſion.

We would alſo ſay this to you, that ye may attain to a divine and holy ſubmiſſion to ſuch a diſpenſation as this, ye would be much in the conſideration from what fountain your repinings and murmurings doth proceed, what is the riſe and original of them, and from which they ſpring? Is it not rather from a principle of pride, then from a principle of love and delight to God; from a principle of ſelf-eſtimation, rather then from a principle of longing for Jeſus Chriſt, and ſorrow for our withdrawing himſelf from you? the evil of *Diotrephas* (*deſiring the preheminence amongſt the brethren*) it is frequent amongſt us, coveting to be, as one ſaid, *Aut Cæſar aut nihil.* We deſire either to be ſingular and matchleſs, or elſe to be nothing. We confeſs, if a Chriſtian did ſeriouſly ponder theſe things, and meditate upon them, certainly he might bluſh and be aſhamed of his own folly; he might cover his face with confuſion, and not dare to look up.

But however, we would deſire you (even you) that have in ſome reality and ſincerity of heart, begune about this moſt precious and moſt bleſſed exerciſe of the grace of prayer, that ye may now begin to renew your diligence, and to add to your diligence, Faith, and to your Faith, Vertue, and comfort your ſelves with this that there is an everlaſting reſt prepared for you in heaven above, which is not like the feaſt of *Aſſuerus* that laſted for *an hundred and fourſcore four days*: but this bleſſed feaſt ſhall laſt throughout all the ages of eternity and endleſs eternity. Believe it, it ſhall be a full and everlaſting feaſt. It ſhall be an everlaſting feaſt of love. It ſhall be a feaſt that ſhall not be capable of any period nor end, nor yet ſhall know of any nothing. There is no ſatiety, neither any loathſomeness in heaven. And, O, may not this comfort you in your

your journey, and incite and provoke your deſires to follow after him, who is altogether deſireable, and altogether lovely, and *that bright and morning ſtar.*

And likewiſe I would ſay this to you, even to you who are Atheiſts and ſtrangers to this precious exerciſe of the duty of prayer; I think it were compleat miſery to you, if there were no more, but that ye are ſtrangers to it, even to the exerciſe of this duty of prayer: for we think the exerciſe of godlineſs it is a reward to it ſelf, as we may ſay that word, *Pietas ſibi præmium.* It is ſuch an inconceivable and excellent a thing, that it is a reward to them whoſoever have it: And, O! will not your hearts be prevailed with, to fall in love with ſuch a rare and excellent exerciſe, even with the exerciſe of godlineſs, which we conceive is *profitable for all things*? And, O will ye make it your ſtudy to pray to God and to be in the exerciſe of godlineſs, without which ye ſhall never *ſee God*; without which ye ſhall never be admitted to behold him (the beholding of whom is the exerciſe of all the ſaints, and of all the ſouls of juſt men now made perfect, and of all thoſe precious thouſands that are now about his glorious Throne) and without the exerciſe of which, theſe feet of yours ſhall never be admitted to ſtand within the bleſſed gates of that precious City, even the City of *the New Jeruſalem*, where *all the redeemed of the Lord are*; and without the exerciſe of which, ye ſhall be eternally and undoubtedly undone. If ye want godlineſs, ye ſhall undergo the pains of hell, and the torments of that lake that burneth with fire and brimſtone: and the day is coming when that curſe (that ſad curſe) ſhall be ſadly accompliſhed upon you, which is in *Deut.* 28. 34. *Thou ſhalt be mad for the ſight of thine eyes which thou ſhalt behold, and when the Lord ſhall ſmite thee with a curſe that thou canſt not be healed of, even from the ſole*

foot to the crown of thy head, and thou shalt become an astonishment, and a proverb unto all nations whithersoever the Lord shall carry thee, and thou shalt be smitten before thine enemies: Thou shalt go out one way against them, and thou shalt flee seven waies before them: and thy carcass shall be meat unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field, and none shall fray them away; and all these things shall come upon thee till thou be destroyed.

O Atheists, what a terrible and dreadful sight shall it be, when ye shall behold those black and hideous everlasting chains, that shall once be wreathed about your cursed necks. O, to be thinking that ere long ye are to dwell and take up your everlasting prison, out of which there is no redemption again; and the door of the prison house is sealed with the seal of the King, which is an unchangeable and unalterable decree. Oh, if the apprehensions and thoughts of this could once provoke and stir you up to pitty your own precious and immortal souls, (with which there is no exchange) Oh, what a woful and marvellous stupidity and hardness of heart hath overtaken the people of this present generation, that go to hell with as much delight and ease, as if they were going to heaven? Oh, that your spirits were once wakened from your security, that ye might perceive the woful and miserable condition that ye are lying under. O Christians, what are ye resolved to do? Are ye not affraid that ye shall be benighted with your work? Oh, shall the sufferings of these pains first resolve you, and clear you of the sadness and inextricable sorrows that are in this bottomless pit; now to him who is that blessed Master of Assemblies, who can fix these words as nails in our hearts, and who can rove them therein, to his blessed and holy Name we desire to give praise.

SER-

SERMON IV.

1 Thess. 5. 17. *Pray without ceasing.*

WE desire to commend the blessed and precious estate of those that are now exalted above the reach of this blessed exercise, and who have now made a blessed and precious exchange, that instead of praying without ceasing, they are now praising without ceasing. And, O beloved of the Lord, (if so we may call you) whether is that blessedness gone which you did speak of, *the enjoyment and fruition of Christ*, so that if he would have required it of you, *you would have plucked out your right eyes, and given them to him?* O, is he become less precious, that your respects to him are so much impaired? Was it not once your divine and blessed lot, that ye could not have lived one day without the enjoyment of him, in whose face your eternal blessedness doth lie? O, but absence and estrangement from him is thought a dispensible want in these days, and that which is the ground of the expostulation, is, that ye are so little in giving obedience unto his blessed and precious command, *Pray without ceasing.* Yea, if the stones and walls of this house, and if the rafters thereof could speak, they might utter this complaint upon many inhabitants of this City *that they do not watch unto prayer*, and are not exercising themselves in the entertaining a divine and precious correspondence with heaven. Oh! whether is the exercise of that precious duty of prayer gone? O! how independent are we in our talk with God? O! when did you taste so much of his sweetness, that when you did reflect upon it, ye were forced to say, *Did not our hearts burn within us, while he spake with us?* When did ye cast an indissolvable knot of love upon your heads, which ye hoped eternally could not loose, nor dissolve? I wonder that this is not a que-

queſtion which we do not more debate, how ſuch undervaluers of communion and fellowſhip with God here below (who can live many days without ſeeing the Sun or Stars, without beholding of him) can walk with ſuch woful contentment? O! can ſuch a deluſion overtake you as this, that ye can reign as Kings without Chriſt, and be rich and full without his fulneſs? It were, no doubt, the ſpecial advantage of a Chriſtian, to be retiring from all things that are here below; and to be incloſing himſelf in a ſconce, *in a bleſſed and divine contemplation of that inviſible Majeſty, and to have our ſouls united to him by a threefold cord which is not eaſily broken.*

But now to come to the words, the next thing which we intend to ſpeak from this, is, to know what is the moſt compendious way to keep your ſouls in life, and to have them flouriſhing as a watered garden in the exerciſe of prayer, we ſhall ſay theſe four things unto you,

Firſt be much in the exerciſe of the grace of fear when ye go to pray, that ye may have high and reverent apprehenſions of that glorious and terrible Majeſty before whom ye pray: there is a precious promiſe for this in *Iſ.* 60. 5. *Thou ſhalt fear and be enlarged*, &c. O but our Atheiſm (and our having that inſcription engraven on all our devotions, *worſhipping of an unknown God*) maketh us to have ſo little acceſs unto him, and taſte ſo little of that ſweetneſs, *that cauſeth the lips of thoſe that are aſleep to ſpeak.* How often-times go ye to prayer, and are no more in the exerciſe of fear, than if ye were to ſpeak to one that is below you? Thoſe glorified ſpirits that are now about his Throne, O, with what holy reverence and awe do they adore him! And if it be the practice of the higher Houſe, why ought it not to be the practice of this lower Houſe.

Secondly, if ye would attain to enlargement in the exer-

exerciſe of Prayer, ye would be much in paying thoſe vowes that ye have made to God, when ye were enlarged. I am perſwaded of this, that our making inquiry after vows, and our deferring to pay them, ſyin our practice (before the Angel) *it was an error*; it doth, no doubt, obſtruct our acceſs and liberty to God: theſe two are conjoyned together, paying of vows and acceſs to God, *Job.* 22. 27. *Thou ſhalt make thy prayer unto him, and he ſhall hear thee* (which is acceſs) *and thou ſhalt pay thy vowes.* Are there not many of us that decree many things without our ſelves that are not eſtabliſhed by God? O, when ſhall our reſolutions and our practice be of like equal extent.

There is a third thing we would give you as a compendious way to attain to the exerciſe of prayer, and enlargements in it be much in the exerciſe of fervency Ah, when we go to prayer under bonds, and ſtraitnings, we take liberty to our ſelves to abbreviate and cut ſhort our prayers? O, do we not know what a bleſſed practice this is, to wreſtle with God, were it until the dawning of the day, *and not to let him go til he bleſs us?* What was it that made way to *Jacobs* enlargements? Was it not his ſeriouſneſs and fervency? and theſe two are often conjoyned in the *Pſalm*, *I cryed, and he heard me*; the one importing his fervency, and the other his acceſs. Our prayers for the moſt part, die before we win up to heaven they proceed with ſo little zeal and fervency from us. This was the ſaying of a holy man, that he never went from God, without God; that ay where he left him, he knew where to find him again. It is a ſaying that many of us doth not ſo much as endeavour to attain to. Alace, we may ſay, that ſin of neutrality and indifferency in prayer, *hath ſlain its ten thouſands* of enjoyments; when our ſins (in prayer) *hath but ſlain their thouſands.*

There is a fourth thing which we ſhall ſpeak unto, is the moſt compendious way to attain enlargement in

in the exercise of prayer & it is this, Ye would be under a deep & divine impression of these things that ye are to speak of to God in the exercise of prayer, either to have your spirits under an impression of sorrow or an impression of joy. In a manner a Christian ought to speak his prayer to his heart, before he speak it to God; and if we spoke no more nor what our hearts doth indite, our prayers would not be long, and we should eshew these vain and needless repetitions that we use in the exercise of that duty of prayer. O, but we are exceeding rash with our mouth, and hasty with our spirits in uttering things before God. Almost we never go to prayer, but if we had so much grace as to reflect upon it, we might be convinced of this, that we have uttered things that have not been fit to be uttered to God; as when ye speak of your burdens and crosses which ye never did seriously premeditate upon; and likewise speak of these things, as your joy, in which ye did never rejoice. O, conceive ye him to be altogether such an one as your self, that such a woful cursed practice and delusion as this should overtake you? If a Christian would study before he go to prayer, to imprint and engrave his desires and petitions upon his heart, he might have more liberty and access in the proposing of them unto God.

Now we shall shut up our discourse upon this noble grace and duty of prayer, with this, to speake a little unto the answers and returns of prayer.

And the first thing that we shall speak upon this subject, is, What can be the reason that the Christians in these days are so little expecting and waiting for the return and answer of their prayers. For do we not oftentimes pray, and yet doth not know what it is to wait for an answer and return to these prayers of ours? this exercise which is so much undervalued by us, the want of it, doth, no doubt, prove that marvellous decay that is in the work of Christians graces.

And

And we conceive that the little waiting for the return and answer to prayer, doth proceed from the want of the solide faith, and of the absolute necessity that we stand in of those things that we pray to God for (for strong necessities makes strong desires, and earnest expectations) but we may say, that our necessities dies without Petitions; we should be more in waiting for, and expecting the returns of our prayers.

There is this likewise, that is the reason of that woful practice; we have not a lively and deep impression of the burden of these things which we would have removed by God: as when one is praying for the removing of some lusts, and some pregnant and predominate evil, and yet never cares whether it be removed or not; and the reason of this which makes us wait for, and expect so little the answer and return of our prayers, is, because we are not groaning under that yoak and burden, as though it were unsupportable, but we walk lightly under that yoak and heavy burden, and therefore we wait not for the answers of our Prayers; We look upon our chains and fetters of iniquities, as though they were chains of gold and fetters of silver: and so it is no wonder that we are not much in the expectation and waiting for our return of Prayer, and to have these chains and fetters off us.

And there is this likewise which is the occasion of our little waiting for an answer to our prayers: We have not a right apprehension and uptaking of the preciousnes and excellencies of these things that we seek from God: We do not know and understand what advantage should flow to us from the having of these things that we seek, and what marvelous disadvantage shall flow to us from the want of them. O! but the people of this present generation, where in we now live, have put a low rate upon the things of Re-

Religion, which are of their everlasting and soul-concernment, even those things that were accounted most precious and excellent by all those that have gone before us, and have taken up their possessions and eternal abode in that blessed land which is above. There is one thing which we do undervalue and set at nought, and that is our communion and fellowship with God. We are indifferent in the having of it, and cares not whether we have it or not, which maketh us not earnestly to press after the pursuing of it. O Christians, be perswaded of it that there are these three disadvantages that followeth unto a Christian that is not much in waiting for the answer and return of his prayer after he hath prayed.

The first disadvantage is this, it is a compendious way to win to formality in the duty of Prayer. I will not say that one which doth not always wait for an answer to his prayer, that he cannot pray in spirit and in sincerity and fervency, but I need not be afraid to say this, that he which is not much in the exercise of waiting for a return and answer to his prayer, he prays little to purpose: and it may be demonstrated and clearly shown by this reason; can ye be serious in the accomplishment of the means, if ye do not propose some end and design before your eyes, why ye do so? Now, what is the end and scope that ye propose before your selves in your going about the exercise of the duty of prayer? I confess, we ought to go about it not only as a help and mean to remove our evils, and to obtain our advantages, but likewise we ought to go about it as a duty incumbent to us: but if we go about the exercise of prayer, under both these considerations, and except we wait for the return and answer, certainly we pray not aright.

There is a second disadvantage which a Christian that doth nor wait for the answer and return of his prayer, he loseth many sweet experiences of the love

love and good will of God toward him It is no wonder that many of us doth not receive much from God, the reason of it is, because we are not expecting and waiting for much from him. I will not say but a christian that is not much in the exercise of waiting, may sometimes obtain the answer and return of his prayers; but we may say these things to such persons. If your prayers be answered, and ye have not waited for the return and answer of them, surely ye lose much sweetness and preciousness of the answer of your prayers. There is this likewise which we would say to such persons as these, if a christians prayer be answered when he doth not wait for the answer of it, then the Christian cannot so resolutely build his faith upon such an experience to believe that God again will answer his prayers, as if he had been waiting upon a return.

There is this third disadvantage that follows a Christian who is not much in the exercise of waiting for the return and answer to his prayer. He cannot continue long in a praying frame. I conceive that the most fit and compendious way for a Christian to keep his spirit in a holy and divine correspondence with God, is to have it always in a holy and fit capacity to converse with God: this is a way to be much in the exercise of waiting for the return and answer of prayer. It is a sweet exercise to be expecting and waiting *till the vision shall speak* to you.

Now are there not many here who if ye were posed with this question, When were ye put to the serious exercise of waiting for the return and answer of your prayers after ye have prayed? I am perswaded of it, ye should find it a difficulty to fall upon the number of the days wherein ye were taken up in this exercise. I think that which doth so plainly demonstrate that woful formality and dreadful indifferency that is amongst us (in going about the exercise of this duty

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ty of Prayer) is this, We do not wait for the answers and returns of our prayers from God. O Christians, are ye so perfectly compleat, or have ye already attained to the full stature of one in Christ, that ye do not wait for the answer and returns of your prayers, that so ye may receive more from God?

And I would say this to these atheists and strangers to God, who never knew what it was to wait for an answer and return to their prayers: and are there not many such here, who if their Conscience were now posed, when they did wait for a return to their prayers, they might (if they speak the truth) say that they did never wait for an answer to their prayers, I say to such, that they did never pray aright.

Now the second thing which we shall speak upon the returns and answers of prayer, is, how a christian may come to the distinct knowledge of this, that his prayers are heard and answered? A thing indeed, we confess, that many of us are not much taken up with, we not being in the exercise to know such a thing.

And first, there is a difference betwixt the hearing of prayer, and of getting a return and answer to prayer, God in the depth of his unsearchable wisdom, may sometimes hear our prayers, and yet make a long time to interveen before he give the sensible return and answer of that prayer: this is clear from *Dan.* 10. 12, 13. where it is said to *Daniel, that from the first day that he afflicted his soul, his prayers and supplications were heard*: and yet it is one and twenty days before the answer and return of his prayer did come. These are two distinct mercies to the Christian, the hearing of his prayer, and receiving the answer and return of his prayer which he hath prayed for. And it is clear from *Psal.* 34. 6. *This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his trouble.*

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We shall say this secondly, that there is a great and vast difference betwixt the returns of prayer, and the delaies of the returns of it, and yet it were a bad inference to infer, that God doth deny to give us he answer of our prayers, though he delay them a while, or to say that we can have no answer at all, though we confess, that is the common place from which Christians doth bring all their arguments to prove that their prayers are not heard, even the delay of the answer and return to their prayers: and his is clear from *Revel.* 6. 10, 11. *Where the souls of these that are crying to God for the revenge of their blood upon the earth*, their prayer is heard, and yet withal, *they are desired to stay a little, until their brethren (that are to be slain) shall be fulfilled, and then their prayer shall be fulfilled and accomplished unto them.*

There is this thirdly, that we shall speak to, and it is this, That sometimes our prayers may be both heard and answered, and yet we will not believe that it is so, when we are waiting for the distinct and solide apprehension of this mercy: and we conceive that this is either occasioned through the greatness of affliction upon a Christian, and the continuance of his stroke, as it is evidently clear from *Job* 9. 16, 17. where Job saith: *If I had called, and he had answered me, yet would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice.* And he gives this to be the reason of it, *For he breaketh me with a tempest and multiplieth my wounds without cause.* Or this may be the reason of it likewise, Why? when our prayers are both heard and answered, we believe not that it is so, and it is because of the want of the exercise of waiting for an answer, & that we are not much taken up in expecting a return from God to our prayers; therefore when our prayers are heard & answered, we cannot believe that it is so.

There is this fourth thing which we shal speak

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concerning the returns of prayer, that the prayers andpetitions of a Christian, even while he is under the xercise of misbelief, they may be heard and taken off his hand, as it is clear from *Psal.* 116. 11, 12. *I said in my haste, all men are liars:* But there is a sweet and predous experience which followeth that. *what shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me:* and this s clear from *Jonah* 2. 4. compared with *vers.* 7. where he saith, *I am cast out of thy sight*; and yet he saithin verse 7. *When my soul fainted within me, I remembred the Lord, and my prayer came in unto thee, unto thyholie Temple.*

Now, to give some answer to the question which we proposed how one may know whether or not his prayers be answered; First, if a Christian be enlarged & enabled to go one in duty, thogh he do not receive a sensible manifestation of the grace & acceptation of his prayer, but (in a manner) he is denyed of the answer and return of it, yet if he do attain to such a length, as to *pray without ceasing*, and to have strength to accompliſh this duty of prayer, that is (no doubt) a clear token and evidence that your prayers and supplications are heard by God, and in his own and appointed time these prayers of yours shall be answered, and this is clear in *Psal.* 138. 3. where *David* eth this as a token and evidence that his prayers ere heard and answered, *In the day when I cried thou answeredst me*: and what is his argument that he geth to prove this, that his prayer was answered? *and strengthnedst me with strength in my soul*, Certly it is a bad sign, and an evil token that your prayare heard; if because he denyeth your suit and pen for a time, ye leave of the exercise of the duty prayer, and faint in the day of your adversity.

There is a second thing by which you may know her or not your prayers have met with a return nswer from God, and it is this, if your prayers

ers be suitable unto his own word, and agreeable unto his holy and most divine will and pleasure, then you may be perswaded of this that God hath heard your prayers, this is abundantly clear from 1 John 5. 14. *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will he heareth us.* Certainly it is difficult and exceeding hard, we confess, for a Christian to exercise faith upon the sure word of prayer, abstracting from all other grounds: But if we would have our faith elevated and raised to so divine a pitch, we would believe this precious truth, *That whatsoever we ask according to his will he heareth us*, and that he will answer our supplications; therefore will ye wait patiently and faithfully upon God.

There is this 3. thing whereby you may know whether or not your prayers be heard, and it is, if ye have delight and spiritual joy, in the exercise of this blessed duty of prayer, though ye have not the return and answer of your prayers, yet it is an evidence and token that your prayers are heard, and you shal shortly have an answer given to him: and when you lose your delight in duties which ye once attained to, then ye may be afraid thereat; there is somewhat of this hinted at in *Job* 27. 9, 10. where *Job* giveth this as a reason and ground that he will not hear the prayer and supplication of the hypocrites, *because he delighteth not himself in the Almighty*: Inferring this much, that if he would delight himself in God, then he would hear his prayer and give him a return and answer to it.

There is this fourth thing whereby you may know whether or not your prayers are heard and answered, and it is when your sadness and anxiety (about that which you were asking from God in prayer) is removed and taken away: This is clear from 2 *Sam.* 18. where this is given as an evidence that *Hannah* heard in her prayer and supplication, *because*

countenance was no more ſad, and certainly when our prayers have ſuch a return, then we may know diſtinctly that they are anſwered by the Lord.

And the fifth thing that we would propoſe to you, whereby ye may know whether or not your prayers have met with a return and anſwer from God, if ye pray, making uſe of Jeſus Chriſt as a bleſſed Dayesman to interpoſe himſelf betwixt the Father and you, then you may be perſwaded of this, that your prayers are heard; this is clear, where it is twice repeated; John 14.13, 14. *Whatſoever ye ask in my name, ye ſhall receive it*, believe it, he can deny you nothing that you ſeek from him, if you ask in faith.

Now that which thirdly we ſhal ſpeak to upon the return of prayer, it is, to theſe things which doth obſtruct the hearing of our prayers, why they are not anſwered by him; ſo that oftentimes when we pray to him, *he ſhutteth out our prayers from him, and coveriſh himſelf with a cloud, ſo that our prayers cannot paſs thorow*: O but if that duty and precious counſel which *Ezekiah* gave unto *Iſaiah*, 37.4. which truly is worthy to be engraven on our hearts, *Lift up thy prayer*, &c. which doth import that it was a weighty thing, which would require much ſeriouſneſs in going about it: I ſay, if that worthy counſel were obeyed, we ſhould not have need to propoſe theſe obſtructions, and to complain of Gods wayes. Now we ſhall ſpeak to theſe obſtructions which hinder us.

Firſt, hypocriſie which we have in the exerciſe of prayer: O but we pray much with our judgement, when we pray not much with our affections: that our light will cry out crucifie ſuch a luſt; and our affection will cry again out, hold thy hand, it is a faulty to have the ſpirit of a Chriſtian brought to ſuch length, as to have his judgements and affections like meaſure and extent; *Job* giveth this as a reaſon

a reaſon why God will not hear a hypocrites prayer, *Job* 27. O, even becauſe he is not conſtant there is a woful diſagreeance betwixt what we ſpeak and what we think: we ſpeak many things with our mouth, which our hearts ſometimes witneſs that we would not have God granting us (in a manner) our affection is a proteſtation againſt the returns to many of our prayers: Our idols are ſo fixed in our hearts, that we ſpare *Agag* the King of our luſt, though there be given out a commandment from the Lord to deſtroy all theſe; and it may oftentimes ſpeak, that the bitterneſs of death is paſt out againſt us: Seeing we do oftentimes ſpare them contrary to his bleſſed command.

There is a ſecond thing which obſtructs the exerciſe of prayer, and it is that wofull and curſed end that we propoſe to our ſelves in going about this duty, this is clear in *James* 4.3. *You ask, and receive not, becauſe ye ask amiſs, that ye may conſume it upon your luſts.* O! that wofull idolatry that Chriſtians does intertain in the exerciſe of prayer. That glorious and inconceivable attribute of God, of being *Alpha* and *Omega*, which we do ſacrilegiouſly attribute to our ſelves in making our ſelves the beginning of our prayers and the end of them alſo, it hinders much our return of prayer; certainly theſe wofull ends that we ſpeak of in the beginning of our diſcourſe (and all along it) it doth (no doubt) marvellouſly obſtruct the anſwers of our prayers.

Now the laſt thing that we ſhal ſpeak upon the return of prayer, ſhall be to ſome advantages which a Chriſtian may have from this, that his prayers are anſwered, and that he hath received a return from the Lord, believe me, there is more love in the anſwer of one prayer then Eternity could make a comment upon; O, what love is in this, that he ſhould co-

ſcend to hear our prayers ? That ſuch a glorious and infinite Majeſty ſhould (in a manner) deigs himſelf to bow down his ear to take notice of theſe petty deſires that we propoſe unto him ? And there are theſe five advantages that a Chriſtian may have from this.

1. It is an excellent way to keep the grace of love in exerciſe, this is clear in *Pſal.* 116. 1. *I love the Lord, becauſe he hath heard the voice of my ſupplications.* O but love in ſome hath eminently taken fire when they have reflected upon this, that their prayers are heard.

There is this ſecond advantage that a Chriſtian hath, it is an excellent motive and perſwaſion to make us conſtant and frequent in the exerciſe of prayer, this is clear in *Pſal.* 116. 2. where he reflecteth upon the hearing of his voice, *therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.* I am perſwaded of this, that our little exerciſe in prayer, doth much proceed from this that we wait not for a return of prayer, and therefore ofttimes it is that we do not receive a return believe me, there is more joy and divine ſatisfaction to be found in the ſolide and ſpiritual convictions of this that our prayers are heard, then we will have in the exerciſe of many prayers that we pray.

There is a third advantage that a Chriſtian hath from the return and anſwer of his prayer, it is an evident token from the Lord that his prayer is accepted [illegible] him, when a Chriſtian can read his reconciliation [illegible] the gracious returns of his prayer, and that he is in [illegible] cious eſtate and condition, and, O! is not that a [illegible] t advantage ? We confeſs God may hear the pray[illegible] of the wicked for mercies that are common, but [illegible] hearing of a real Chriſtians prayer both in mercies [illegible] pon and ſpecial proveth that his perſon is acce[illegible] by God, we muſt be accepted of him through Je[illegible] riſt before that he can have pleaſure in our ſa[illegible], and is not this a precious advantage to read [illegible] option upon the returns and anſwers of your prayers

prayers from God? May not the Chriſtian ſay when he meets with ſuch a return & anſwer of his prayer, now I am perſwaded *that I am begotten unto a lively hope, becauſe he hath heard the voice of my application* ? In a manner, it is a character wherein you may read your intereſt and infeftment in that precious and moſt bleſſed inheritance that is above. O if there were no more to provoke you to wait for the return and anſwer of your prayers, nor this it may be ſufficient unto many of theſe debates and diſputings that you have about your intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt; And, O may not this argument provoke you to love him.

The fourth advantage that comes to the Chriſtian from the conſideration of the return and anſwers of his prayer, It is a compendious way to make us deſiſt from the committing of iniquity; Hence is that word in *Pſal.* 6. 8. where upon the conſideration of the hearing of his prayer, he breaketh forth in that ſaying, *Depart from me all ye workers of iniquity, for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping.* In a manner, ſpeaking ſo much, that he would have nothing to do with ſuch ones as they were.

Laſtly, the return and anſwer of prayer is an excellent way to keep our faith in exerciſe, it is a ſweet experience of the love of God, upon which we may build our hope in our darkeſt night, even to call to mind theſe things that he hath given to us in former dayes, certainly a holy and divine reflection upon theſe things might perſwade us that he will not [illegible] up his tender and loving mercies, into an everla[illegible] forgetfulneſs.

Now to cloſe up our diſcourſe upon this noble duty and grace of prayer, we ſhall deſire this one thing of you, *who is begotten unto a lively and precious hope*, That you may be more in that noble exerciſe; I may ſay, that there is no ſin which a Chriſtian ſhall be more deeply convinced of in th[illegible]

when his feet shal be standing upon the utmost line of time, as this sin of the neglect of the duty of prayer; And we confess God may reprove many, *That they bind heavy burdens on mens shoulders that are grievous to be born; and doth not so much themselves, as touch them with one of their fingers.*

But however, seriously enlarge your hearts unto this blessed exercise, for believe me, it is the way (if so we may speak) to bring down heaven upon earth; But alace, I am afraid that this duty of prayer is not much now in practice amongst many of us in these days: is not prayer that noble duty almost laid by in this evil and perverse generation as a thing unsavory? Oh, that ye had now a divine anticipation of that glorious enjoyment of him, which you shall have throughout all the ages of Eternity if you be serious in this exercise? Oh, may we not walk mournfully many dayes in the bitterness of our souls, because we are not more in the exercise of secret prayer? Oh! whether is our devotion gone in these dayes? Oh! whether is it gone I am afraid; that if these that have lived before in ancient dayes, were now alive, doubtless they would be ignorant of us, and they would not acknowledge us for Christians. I would say this for these who never seriously practised this duty as yet, of which number there are many? O, but prayer be another thing then the most part of you conceives it to be. I think it is not only mysterious in its nature, to conceive how the spirit of man can converse with him that is the Father of spirits, how there should interveen a communion and fellowship betwixt such two. It is a mystery and riddle surely, which we cannot easily unfold. But withal, *This is a lamentation and shall be for a lamentation, that the exercise and practice of prayer is grown as mysterious as the nature of it.* O, but there are many of you that supposes ye are praying aright, and there-

therefore you think all is well, who shall be cut off as those that never prayed. I conceive if we believe all that is spoken upon this exercise of prayer, what divine properties are requisite to a Christian, that would seriously go about the exercise of this precious duty, we might cry forth, *This is a hard saying, who can hear it?* And certainly it is altogether impossible for us, though it be not impossible for God, to inlarge our hearts to pursue it; *For with him nothing is impossible.* Oh, that if once ye might be perswaded to set about the exercise of this precious and most excellent duty of prayer, which will be to your eternal advantage, and soul everlasting concernment, I am afraid (O Christians) that if one from Heaven (who hath entred into these everlasting and blessed possessions of that excellent and blessed estate of life) would come down to earth (if so with reverence we may speak) and preach upon this Text of ours, *Pray without ceasing*, and speak of these precious and unspeakable advantages which do accompany the man that is much in the exercise of prayer, there be many of us, I fear, would scarcely be inclined to hear such an exhortation. And more nor this, if one from the dead would arise, and come from the pit unto this city, and preach upon this Text unto you, *Pray without ceasing*, having the chains of everlasting wrath hanging about his neck, and preach upon these sad and unspeakable disadvantages which are to be found in the neglect of this blessed exercise of this duty of prayer, and desire you to flee from that wrath that is to come. Oh, would there not be many of you (I am afraid) who would stop your ears, and would not listen to the voice and language of such an exhortation. Ah, whether are many of us going? Whether are we going? Certainly, the apprehensions and thoughts of everlasting separation from the presence of

Is not much ingraven and deeply imprinted upon the ſpirits of the hypocritical Chriſtians of this generation? vve are not afraid of that wrath and eternal deſtruction vvhich is approaching unto us.

But to you that are heirs of the promiſe, vvho are heirs of the grace of life, and *who are begotten again unto a lively hope.* I would ſay this unto you, *Pray without ceaſing*; and once you ſhall ſing without all ceaſing, and without all interruption: and to theſe that pray not, the day is coming when they ſhal howl in that bottomleſs pit amongſt thoſe everlaſting flames of fire and brimſtone, vvhen they ſhall be brayed in the morter of the vvrath of God by the peſtel of his ſevere Juſtice, vvhen his omnipotency ſhall uphold you, and his Juſtice ſhall ſmite you eternally. Oh, it vvere many of your advantages that you vvere indeed leaſt vvithout immortal ſouls. For to have ſouls, doth capacitate you for an eternal being, and for an eternal punishment.

SERMON V.

Prov. 4. 23. *Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the iſſues of life.*

WE conceive if there vvere a vvindow opened in each one of our boſoms, through vvhich each one of us that are here, might behold one anothers hearts, vve vvould become monſters and vvonders one of us to another, and to our ſelves likewiſe, might cry out, *O, where is the God of judgement takes not vengeance on ſuch deceitful hearts?* If our hearts vvere turned out of us (ſo to ſpeak) and if vve ſaw the inſide of our hearts, vve vvould vvonder at his patience. I think ſuch is the deſperate deceitfulneſs of our hearts, that if all the Saints ſince *Adams* days, and ſhall be to the end of the World, had but one heart to guide, I think they would miſguide it, I would only

only ſay this to believers, that if you hearts vvere left one hour to your ſelves to keep, ye would commit more iniquity, then ye can imagine or dream of. There is only theſe four things that I vvould ſpeak to before I come to the words: and I vvould requeſt you to take notice of them: And firſt, there is many of us that hath two hearts in our boſome, for ſuch an one is the hypocrite, *James* 1. 8. *A double minded man is unſtable in all his vvayes*, that is, a man that hath two hearts, a part of his heart goeth to God, and a part of his heart goeth to the Devil. And I think, if we were all vvell ſearched, it is to be feared that many of us vvould be found two hearted men. Secondly, that although ye vvould give Chriſt all your members, yet if you vvould not give him your hearts, it ſhould be nothing thought of; if you would give him your eye, ſo that you ſhould not look to your idols pleaſantly; nor yet look with delight upon any curſed or ſinful object; and if you would give him your ears, ſo that you could nor would not hearken to the voice of any of your temptations; *but be as deaf as an adder unto them*; and if you would give him your tongue ſo that you ſhould not ſpeak any thing diſhonourable to him, and if you would give him your feet, ſo that you ſhould not vvalk in any way, but in an approven path of godlineſs? Now, I ſay, although you vvould give him all theſe members of your body, yet if ye give him not your heart, it is all to no purpoſe, *Prov.* 32.26. *My ſon, give me thy heart*, &c.

Thirdly, there are many which give their hearts to their idols, and their tongues to Chriſt, but in the day they ſhal be found to be but deceivers. Laſtly, it is a noble thing for a Chriſtian to be taken up in the keeping of his heart: I may ſay this of the heart which the Apoſtle *James* ſaid of the tongne, *it is an unruly evil full of deadly poiſon*, *James* 3. 8. The heart is taken up with whoring from God, and with contriving

triving the way how to satisfie its lusts, and continually forsaking the living God? Our hearts are doing nothing in all our life time (many of us) but prophaning his Holy Name, and blaspheming the God of *Jacob*.

Now to come to the words, there are four things therein. First, the duty imposed upon a Christian, and that is to keep his heart. Secondly, that the heart of man hath many seekers, which is imported in that word *keep*. Thirdly, you have the qualification and way how a Christian should keep his heart, which are rendered in these words, *with all diligence*, or as the words may be rendered, *with all keeping*. And lastly, the reasons why you should do so, *for out of it are the issues of life*, for if you do so, you shal have life, but if not, from thence is the issues of death. Now from the first thing in the words, ye would consider these two things.

First, that is a duty incumbent to every Christian to keep his heart; this is clear, not onely from our Text, but likewise in Deut. 4. 9. *Only take heed to thy self, and keep thy soul diligently, &c.* Pro. 23. 19. *Guide thy heart in the way.* Which is, study to keep it diligently in the way of godliness, and it is clear likewise that a Christian ought to keep his heart for the great advantages that are holden out in Scripture for so doing, only take that place in *Prov.* 16. 32. *Better is he that ruleth his spirit, then he that taketh a city.*

The second thing that I would say, is, to point out the woful disadvantages that waits upon him that rules not his own heart, but gives it leave to rove here and there, Prov. 25. 28. *He that hath not rule over his own spirit, is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.* And there is these two disadvantages that waits upon not keeping of the heart. 1. There is no temptation that assaults a heart that is not kept, but they become victorious, spiritual strength hath forsaken them

them that keeps not their hearts. 2. There is no exercise nor duty a Christian is imployed in, which keeps not his heart, but he is like a ruinous city which hath no walls, and in which there is no order.

Now, the next thing that I would speak to, is to show what it imports to keep the heart, and what are the directions and wayes which a Christian ought to have before him in the exercise and duty of keeping his heart.

And first, it imports this, that a Christian should observe the motions of his heart, and should not let his heart nor thoughts go astray, but should have a register of all their motions, as is clear in *Luke* 21. 34. [And take heed to your selves, lest at any time your heart be overcharged with surfeting and drunkenness and cares of this life; and so that day come upon you unawares.]

The second thing which keeping of the heart includes is, You must keep all the things that pertains to your hearts; and there are these five things which ye must keep. First, your thoughts, you must keep your thoughts so straitly, that you must not give them any sinful latitude in the least manner. Secondly, a Christian he must keep his eyes, which are the windows through which much wickedness is conveyed to the soul, Prov. 23. 26. *My son give me thy heart,* &c. Prov. 4. 25. *Let thine eye look right on, and let thine eye-lids look straight before thee*: as if *Solomon* had said, it is but foolishness to keep your hearts, if ye keep not your eyes. Thirdly, ye must keep your tongue that they speak no evil of the wayes of godliness, for so is the words following the Text, *Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee*, which is, Order thy tongue. Fourthly, you must keep your feet, that you walk not in the paths of wickedness, if once you give a latitude to your feet to go in the way to hell, it shall be but in-

vain to keep your hearts, therefore keep your feet from running to the murther of your own souls. Lastly, ye must keep your ears, ye should delight to speak good of godliness, and ye should also delight to hear good spoken of it: ye should not be among these that savor of nothing but of sin, but ye should be amongst these that savor of good; therefore as ye would not be accessary to the murther of your own souls, and as ye would not have the blood of them lying upon your heads, ye must needs keep all these parts that belongs to the keeping of your hearts aright.

The third thing which the keeping of your hearts includes, is to eshew all unclean things that may defile your hearts; *Prov.* 5. 8. *Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house.* When you see any evil thing approaching, you must depart from it, and eshew it; *Deut.* 12. 30. *Take heed to thy self that thou be not snared*; there is many snares, that may be accessary to destruction, and there is this that *Moses* marks as a chief evil, and likewise oftentimes forbids in this book to have false *weights and ballances*, Levit. 19.39. Deut.25.15. they are not sinful of themselves, but because they are an appearance of evil, we should eschew them, therefore he forbids them; and the Apostle bids us likewise *abstain from all appearance of evil*, 1 Thes.5.22.

The fourth thing which keeping of the heart includes, is to put restrains on your hearts that so ye should not commit iniquity, ye ought first to lay the love of Christs love upon your selves, ye should likewise lay the bond of judgement upon your selves, knowing that once God shal call you to a reckoning for all your wickedness, which now must wickedly not commit; and ye ought to lay the bonds of Gods mercy upon your selves, to know and consider all things are known to him, and that he seeth all and ye ought likewise to consider how grie-

vous

vous and how displeasant a thing sin is to the Majesty of God, that man who is the workmanship of his hand, shall rise up against him: We may say that of our selves which is in *Lam.nt.*3.22. *It is of the Lords mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassion fail not, they are fresh every morning*: &c. All these things a Christian ought to lay to heart. and seriously to consider them.

The fifth thing which keeping of the heart includes, a Christian ought not to slight the opportunities given unto him for the strengthning of his grace; for they which slight opportunities, keep not their own hearts.

The last thing which it imports, is, that a Christian would be much in the diligent exercise of duties, that the heart may be kept and holden in a noble frame, and there is two exercises which a Christian ought to be diligent in. First, the exercise of prayer. Secondly, the exercise of watching. There is a five-fold frame which a Christian should be in, which would rightly keep his heart. First, in a frame of praying, that he should not be slack and cold-rise to go about duties, the command thereof is holden out in that word, *Watch and pray*; and also in that word, *pray without ceasing?* The second frame should be a believing frame, and it is to be feared that there are not many here, but that there are many walking in such a way and frame, which, alace, I fear, will lead them in the way to hell! If we were sincere, we would hold Christ fast, and would not let him go, and if our hearts were in a right frame, we would avoid any thing that would make him to depart from us; But, alace? We have many clear evidences (now a dayes) that we care not for Christ; we care not whether we have his presence or want it; the want of his presence is as welcome and pleasant to us, and as well taken with by us (I will not say all) as the enjoying of his

and this is a ſure evidence of groſs prophaneneſs, ignorance, and eſtrangement from God. If there were no more to prove it but this, your ſtoutneſs of heart to meddle with ſin, proves that you are unſound Chriſtians. We would deſire you by all the torments of hell, and by all the terrors of that everlaſting lake which burneth with fire and brimſtone for ever and ever; by all the joys of heaven, of that higher houſe, that ye would carry a circumſpect walk before God. The third frame that we would deſire you to walk in, is in a tender frame: and if ſo ye were walking ye would be loath to commit ſin wilfully, and wo ſhall be to them eternally which do ſo. We will not (many of us) believe this, although Angels would preach it unto us, for our hearts are hard like an Adamant ſtone. I would only ſay this to you, this Book, this glorious Book is ſealed with ſeven ſeals, and our hearts are ſealed with fourteen ſeals. O, wo be to thoſe hard hearts that many of us have, we will never know until they run us eternally into the bottomleſs pit. The fourth frame that a Chriſtian ſhould walk in, is in a loving frame. You ought to have your hearts burning within you with love towards that glorious, infinite, and myſterious object, Jeſus Chriſt. We ſhall never be able to comprehended, nor recompenſe that love which he hath to us: for the furtheſt we can go, we are ſick of love for him. But, O, he died with love to us: he had ſo great love to us, that he laid down his life for us. The fifth frame that a Chriſtian ſhould walk in, is a fearing frame to walk under the fear of the hazard that you are in, if you be left to your ſelf, and to your own ſtrength, I may ſay, curſed be the perſon that never keeped his heart in none of the ſe things that we have ſpoken of.

Now the third thing we would ſpeak to from the text is, to know the times when a Chriſtian ſhould eſpecially keep his heart; and there is ſix times when (I conceive) he ſhould watch over his heart carefully and keep it.

1. After he hath met with ſome enjoyments, then he ſhould keep his heart and not let it go wrong.

The ſecond time is, in the time of deſertion; for that time is a wandring time from the living God.

3. A Chriſtian ſhould keep his heart when he perceives his temptations to be very ſubtile.

And the fourth time is, to keep your hearts diligent in duties, for when you are negligent in duties, then the Devils is buſie to get your hearts.

The fifth time is under a ſecure frame, then you ſhould keep your hearts mightily.

And the laſt time, when temptations are like to grow very ſtrong, you ſhould then at that time keep your hearts with a ſtrong guard.

Now as for the firſt time, to wit, to keep it under enjoyments, we ſhould then ſtudy to keep our hearts, for them, and at that time the Devil condeſcends to dandle us upon his knees (if ſo we may ſpeak) and for for this we would give you ſome conſiderations.

The firſt *conſideration* is, the heart of man is never prouder and proner to commit iniquity, then after enjoyments of God, he is never more prone to ſecurity then after enjoyments, when was it that the ſpouſe ſleeped, but when ſhe was full of joy? *Song* 5.3. *I have put off my coat, how ſhal I put it on again?* &c. When was it that the Diſciples raved, but when they were on the Mount, when they ſaid, *Let us make three Tabernacles*, Matt. 17.14. And when was it that *John* committed Idolatry? was it not when he ſaw theſe excellent viſions of heaven.

The 2. *conſider.* Is, that the ſtroke which is given by the Devil after enjoyments, it is a very ſad ſtroke, and hath cauſed many to ſay, *who can ſtand before the children of Anak?* and to draw that concluſion, *I ſhall once fall by the hand of ſome of mine enemies.*

The

The third consideration is this, if a Christian imbrace a temptation after enjoyments, it will be very hard for him to shake it off.

The fourth consideration is, that the imbracing of a temptation after enjoyments, it is a sin very hardly to be repented for, it will cost him many tears for repenting of it; for it is a hardning thing which will harden his heart mightily under all sorts of sins which we can commit.

Fifthly, consider this, that the imbracing of a temptation after enjoyments, it is very displeasing to Christ, when ye imbrace an idol, and prefers it before an absent Christ. O that is a most dangerous sin? But when you imbrace an Idol after enjoyments, that is a damnable sin, for ye prefer it to a present Christ; O that is a fearful sin

Now the second time when ye should keep your hearts is, when ye are going about the exercise of duties, and especially in the duty of prayer, and ye should keep it in four or five respects. First, in going about duties, and namely in prayer; ye are letting in vain thoughts, if your hearts be not well keeped. Secondly, the heart of a Christian is most ready to fall in the sin of formality, and therefore if ye keep not your hearts well in duties, you cannot be but formal in the performance of them. Thirdly, our hearts many times have too low thoughts and uptakings of the incomprehensible Majesty of God; The damnable ignorance which is amongst people, makes them get so little advantage in prayer, do you not speak to him as one of your fellow companions? Where is the exercise of fear, and of trembling, which Christians in old times used to have, as *Moses* when he appeared and spake before God? Fourthly, our hearts are prone to unbelief, and ready always to misbelieve God, and his promises. Lastly, except ye keep your hearts it is impossible for you to take alongst with you necessity,

ty, if one were standing by and heard your prayers, they would say that you are not in earnest with God; for you seek such things from a principle of light, and not from necessity. Now I would pose you with this, whether ever ye have been observant in any of these duties or not, There are many whose prayers make them to have more distance with God, therefore I would request you to look to this, that ye be serious in prayer, and to know whether or not this be your frame, for there is some that will come from prayer with far moe bonds on them then when they began, and what is the reason of that, but want of fervency? It is a great mystery of his love that he sends not fire from Heaven to burn our sacrifice, and consume our selves likewise? for what is many of our prayers, *but as it were the cutting off of a dogs neck, which is an abomination to the Lord?*

The third time when a Christian should especially keep his heart, is, under desertion; and I shal give you three reasons why he should watch well at that time. First, the Devil is busiest to seek our hearts under desertion. Secondly, the imbracing of an idol under desertion; it is for that why God lengthens out the time of our lying under desertion so long, because we go to the bed of love with an idol when Christ is away. Thirdly, because a Christian hath least strength then, he loseth both much of his faith and of his love. He maketh you then to look on the World as tasteless as the white of an egg; ye must take that as a dispensation of Christs love, that he makes all things tasteless to you under desertion; That is a noble dispensation, for by it he imposes a necessity upon you to keep your hearts till he return unto you again.

The fourth time when a Christian should keep his heart, is, in a secure frame: I think there are some sleeping in a sleep of conscience, which will never awake till the screighings of the damned in hell awake them.

them. I shal propose these two considerations to keep your hearts in security. 1. Because when ye are secure ye have then least strength; and is there not many amongst you that dare say but that the Devil then assaults you most bitterly? and when you heart is lying in security, it speaks that ye are in a carnal frame. 2. If ye keep not your hearts when ye are secure, then ye may bid faith, love, and joy farewel untill some other time, as ye may see in the practice of *Felix*, *Go away, and I will hear thee at another time*, Acts 24. 25. I would not desire a more sad case to an enemy, then not to keep his heart when he is under security, for he may bid the graces of the spirit farewel untill another time.

The last time when a Christian ought especially to keep his heart, is, when strong and subtile temptations appear plausible, honest like, and beautiful, then you must be upon your watch. O doth not temptations win in upon your hearts, before ever ye be a ware? and this speaks much security and unwatchfulness: I would say it is hard; yea, very hard to a Christian who is not watchful to take up the ways of the Devil, whose ways are more subtile then the way of an Eagle in the air, or the way of a Serpent upon a rock, or the way of a ship upon the sea. Who can comprehend his ways? He tempts us alwayes, both upon our right hand and upon our left hand, both behind and before, both awaking and sleeping; we are never free of his deceitful and unsearchable crafts. I would say this unto you. He is happy that fears always, and hearkens to Christs voice of direction in his word, depending upon him for strength, but many listneth more to the voice of temptations nor to Christs blessed voice.

Now, the next thing which I would speak to, is to propose some considerations to press you to keep your hearts; and, O that ye would consider of them and lay them to heart.

The

The first consideration is this, I think many of us may be afraid that the Devil dwells and keeps possession in many of our hearts, and alace, He is like to be a possessor of some of them perpetually: I will give you five evidences of one that (by all appearance, the Devil hath his heart. And, now I charge you (O Atheists) in the Name of our Lord and Saviour precious Christ, that ye would examine your selves by them. First, was never one of you convinced to cry out that word in Psalm 25. 11. *For thy names sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great*; I say to such persons that was never convinced to cry out this, and were never convinced of the hard difficulty to win to the right keeping of your hearts, by all appearance the Devil hath your hearts in keeping, for these whose hearts are in the hands of the Devil, they are never sensible of their lost estate. Secondly, these who never wan to make use of Christ, that is a token that the Devil hath their hearts in keeping; there are many of us who is convinced of the vanity of our Idols, but yet, alace, many of us drowneth our convictions with the sin of rippling, and buries them in the sepulchre of drunkenness; but believe it, If ye go on so and continue therein, God will plead with you for the famine. The third evidence, one that hath a silent hardned and deceiving conscience, and whose conscience is silent. By all appearance the Devil hath that persons heart in his hand, for the Devil intiseth many to sin with greedyness, and will make their conscience not to reprove them, so that they delight in no better, for he hath taken away the tongue of their conscience, so that it cannot speak: But believe it, the day is coming when your conscience shall be the greatest terror and enemy that ye can or shall have, and believe it, there are many of you here who have your hearts so hardned as those that are mentioned, Ephes. 4. vers. 18.

18. *Who walk in the vanity of their own mind, having the understanding darkned? being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts.* Your conscience when it is cauterized it will not speak to you, although ye would commit that damnable *sin against the Holy Ghost.* And ye think your selves well enough when it doth not reprove you; But, alace, ye sleep with a false witness in your bosome, it hath many alluring delusions, but one day the words of it will be as sharp as swords; it will cry, *Peace, peace, when behold sudden destruction:* It will make you sleep sound for all the danger that is hanging above you. Ye walk (many of you) *adding drunkenness to thirst.* O Atheists! What will ye do when that day shall come upon you, when these two books shall be opened? First, the book of your wandrings and back-slidings, in which a hudge innumerable troup of sins are written. And secondly, the book of your conscience, and there can be nothing read out of that first book but thy conscience shall confirm it with *Amen.*

The second consideration is, that if ye were to live eighty years, and though ye would weep and mourn fourty of these years perpetually, if it could be possible, and pray other fourty of these years, yet all that would be for nought, if ye will not give him your hearts: Believe me, if ye give not him your hearts, that sentence shall be pronounced upon you, *Depart*, Oh, will ye not give him your hearts who ought to have them, both by creation and redemption?

The third consideration is, Did ye ever find any ability to believe, or to pray, or to love God? Ye may be perswaded of it, that ye are sleeping under a dangerous delusion, that ye think ye are going and ready to heaven, when ye shall be thrust down to Hell.

Hell. I would say this, there hath been much joy amongst the Devil and his Angels, for the success which he hath had in *Glasgow*: he hath purchased many harpers to himself, who sing that cursed song, *I am not far from victory.* I think we may turn that word into another way, which Christ said to his disciples, *There is one of you twelve that shall betray me.* I think he may say otherwise of us, eleven of each twelve that are here will betray me. O, it is sad, that the Son of God, even precious Christ, should have so many betrayers amongst us! O, therefore give Christ your hearts. Did ye never read that of *Matth.* 25. 2. there was five wise Virgins; and five foolish, and if there be of professors that shall be rejected; Alace, what shall come of you that never knew him? *And if the righteous scarcely be saved. O, what shal the ungodly and sinners do.*

The fourth consideration is, I would propose these three things to you. First, what is the cause, O Atheists, that ye cannot endure hypocrisie, why ye cannot look upon Christians? The cause is, you hate not onely the Image and picture of Christ, but the very substance of Christ. Why hate ye not the sight of sins, as well as hypocrisie? It is because the sight of sins looks rather like the Devil, and therefore ye love them: but hypocrites seem to have something of God in them, therefore ye hate them. Secondly, O Atheists! do ye believe that there is a Heaven and a Hell, and an eternity of pain, and a day of judgement? If ye believed those things, ye would not be so prophane. Thirdly, did ye ever find any delight in praising & commending of him? Your heart saith No, and your practice saith, no, O wo, wo to you eternally?

The fifth consideration is, the day is approaching, when the least iniquity shall be preached in the hearing of Angels and men that ever ye committed; there shal not a jot of sin be passed by? and

all sinners, the hypocrites shal have the saddest countenance, because they shal be disappointed of a joyful end, and lose the opinion of the Saints, which will make them to look with a sad countenance in that day. A hypocrite will be more moved for the loss of the approbation of the Saints, then for the loss of divine approbation; O! know and consider these three things. First, know that all your iniquities shal be read in the hearing of Angels and Men: The very thoughts which ye have had at midnight, shal be known, What will be your thoughts then, O Atheist, in that day? Secondly, know that hypocrisie may win easily through the world under the name of grace, but in that day there shal be a clear distinction made. It is hard to rid marches betwixt hypocrisie and grace; but God shall take your visorn off your face, and let you be known, and ye shal get the name which ye deserve, O hypocrites. Thirdly, know that wo shal be to such, which shal not be found in Christ at that day? O will ye take him, and give him your hearts, I take all the Angels in heaven, and all the Saints about the Throne of God, to witness, yea I take the very stones of these walls, and the timber of this house, and this book in my hand, to witness against you, that ye were invited to give your hearts to Christ.

The last consideration is, he that will not give his heart to Christ, believe it, these four things are coming upon him. First, he shal be no more intreated to keep his heart, neither shal he be intreated to give his heart to Christ any more; for the Devil shal have it, Secondly, O Atheists! these four things shal overcome you. First, sin it shall have dominion over you: you were delighted mightily in sin; but, alace, it shall be a heavy burden to you in that day. Secondly, the wrath of God shall overcome you: O, that shall be a mighty Prince. Thirdly, the Devil, and lastly, the lusts of your own hearts, all these shall tread you in the myre.

myre. Fourthly, there is this which is coming upon you, O Atheists, *There shal be an sentence of eternal excommunication* pronounced against you which would not give your hearts to Christ. These blessed and gracious lips that always did delight in speaking good to lost sinners, shal then pronounce that sad and woful sentence against you, *Depart from me ye cursed, I know you not?* The last thing which is approaching unto you, is, the day is coming when you shal be sent away to that prison, out of which there is no redemption: Ye shal be a number of miserable comforters one to another in that day. Ye shal not have a grain weight of comfort for all the joy and pleasure which many of you hath had in a world: *You shall be Physicians of no value, and gnash your tongues for pain*: We would say this unto you, O let the torments of hell, or let the joys of heaven perswade you to give him your hearts: Let the one constrain you, or let the other terrifie you to this noble duty of giving him your hearts: and if ye give him not your hearts, ye shall curse the day that ever ye were born, or that ever there was a Prophet amongst you. And ye shall lament that ever ye heard tell of Christ, if ye make not use of him. Now I would only read the Text over again, *Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.* But if ye do not keep it with all diligence, out of it shall be the issues of death, ye shal get eternal torments for your reward.

Now to him who can perswade you to give your hearts in keeping to him, and who can anoint your eyes with eye-salve to see your lost estate, to his blessed Name we desire to give praise.

SERMON VI.

Prov. 4. 23. *Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*

THere are two great books which a Christian ought mainly to study, there is God and his own heart: and he would study to know the unspeakable goodness of the one, and the desperate wickedness of the other. And we may say, the first time that a Christian turns over the first page of his heart, and looks upon that desperate wickedness which is therein, he might be constrained to cry out, *Wo is me, I am undone*, Yea, there is as much wickedness in every ones heart who is here, as might be a quarrel to destroy a whole World, if God would contend with us in his just Judgement; I think Christians can never trust their hearts too little, and they can never trust God to much. And have we not received many proofs of both these? I may say as *Jeremiah* said, *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperatly wicked, who can know it?* O but a sight of the evil temper of our hearts, and a sight of the goodness of God, would make many of us renounce our self-righteousness, and our spiritual pride, and admire his transcendent righteousness. I think a Christian ought to be as these four beasts which is mentioned in *Revel.* 4. 6, 7, 8. where the four beasts that are spoken of there, may relate to the Ministers of the Gospel, and may also be taken for every real Christian. First, we should be full of eyes before, to wait on Christ and depend upon him, *as an hand-maid upon her Mistress*, and not to reflect upon these things that are behind, as to rest upon this according to that word of the Apostle, *I press hard toward the mark, forgetting the things that are behind*, &c. Secondly, a Christian should look to those things that are behind to guard against enemies, and to be much

much in searching his former ways to see how much of them hath been given to God, and how much of them hath been given to the Devil. Thirdly, Christians should be full of eyes within to examine themselves, and to see their own corruptions. There are many who have eyes without to take notice of other peoples carriage, but they have no eyes to look within to themselves: O would to God that there were fewer markers and observers of other peoples carriage, and moe of the examiners and lookers to themselves, *purifying our selves even as he is pure.* Fourthly, we should be as a Lion in our walk, to point out our boldness against the devil and his temptations. Fifthly, we should be like a Calf or an Ox, to point out our laboriousness. Sixthly, we should be like the *face of men*, to point out our understanding and knowledge. Lastly, We should be like a *flying Eagle*, to point our our heavenly mindedness, all our conversation should be directed by the law of God, all our thoughts and all our actions, and all our words should be conformable to his mind, and as the Eagle hath wings, so also ought we to have wings, even as they had six wings, we should have two of them to cover our face, to point out the reverence which we ought to give to God; and we should have two wings to cover our hands, to shew out the readiness to obey Gods Commandments: and we should have two wings to cover our feet, to point out our imperfections, and the crooked paths we walk into, *O* Christians, will ye study these three following things, and ye will not have so high thoughts of your selves as oftentimes ye have. First, it is through the restraining grace of God, that those grievous sins which ye commit, comes not up to the perfection of *Adultery, Sodomie and Incest.* Secondly, There is no sin which ye commit, but there is some secret inclination to it, although ye think ye hate it much.

Thirdly, it is impossible for you to comprehend, take up, and remember those iniquities that ye have committed since ye were born, as *David* is convinced, *Psal.* 51. 2. *Cleanse me from my sin*, &c. which we conceive to be not only from his known sins, but from his sins which he had forgotten; and therefore he bids God make them known unto him, and I would say this unto you, *David who was a man according to Gods own heart*, he knew not the number of his sins; and O how much less can we that never came the hundred part so far! And also you may see it in the practice of *Job*, *How many are mine iniquities, and sins, make me to know my transgression and my sin.*

Now we come to the words, and there is four things which we spoke to from them at the last occasion: First, The duty commanded, *Keep thy heart*, Secondly, The qualification how this duty of keeping the heart should be gone about, and it is *with all diligence.* Thirdly, That the heart of man hath many temptations seeking it, which is likewise presupposed in that word, *keep thy heart with all diligence.* Lastly, The reasons why we should keep it *for out of it are the issues of life.* Now for the first thing in the words, we spoke to two things from it; First, That it was a Christians duty to keep his heart. Secondly, What was comprehended under this for a Christian to keep his heart, and likewise of these disadvantages which a Christian hath from the not keeping of the heart. Now for the first thing, to wit, that it is a Christians duty to keep his heart; We shall speak yet to some considerations to perswade you to this duty.

The first consideration is, Take notice of the bad qualifications of the heart, and there is six or seven bad qualifications of it; First, The heart is exceeding deceitful, *Jer.* 17. 9. *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperatly wicked, who can know it*, and likewise, *Isaiah* speaks of a *deceived heart* which leads people aside, *Isa.* 44. 20. The heart of man is a deceitful thing, it will preach *peace, peace*, when there is none. O, it is deceitful, it will make us commit sin when there is no outward pleasure therein. Secondly, That *the heart is desperatly wicked, who can know it?* that is, if there were threatnings, commands, promises, and convictions of sin, yet the heart will cause you to sin, if hell were put in your way, yet for the pleasure of an idol, ye would run to the sin. Thirdly, That there is a cursed union betwixt the heart and idols, *Hos.* 4. 8. *And they set there hearts on their iniquity*, *Hos.* 4. 17. *Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone.* And that word is thrice repeated, *Ezek.* 14. 3, 4, 5. *They have set up their idols in their hearts.* Keep your hearts with all diligence, I say, lest that union be entertained. Fourthly, There is many of our hearts that is exceeding mad, *Eccles.* 9. 3. *The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead.* Alace, there is nothing but madness in our hearts; according to that word, *The land is full of Images, and they are mad upon their idols.* Certainly the madness of our hearts, speaks that we keep not our hearts. Fifthly, Our hearts are divided, as in *Hos.* 10. 2. *Their hearts is divided*, &c. which speaks a great necessity of keeping our hearts. Sixthly, Our hearts are exceeding whoorish, *Ezek.* 6. 9. *Because I am broken with their whoorish hearts which hath departed from me*, &c. Lastly, Our hearts are exceeding dull and ignorant in the ways of godliness, as in *Eph.* 4. 18. *Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their hearts.* There is such an Egyptian hardness upon our hearts, that we cannot know sin, there is some of us (that I fear) knows not good by evil.

The second consideration is, there is such a difficulty to keep our hearts, therefore we ought strongly to guard them. *Adam* had his heart but a short time in keeping, and yet he could not keep it; which shews the difficulty in keeping of it. *Psal.* 25. 20. *O keep my soul and deliver me, let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in thee.* 1 Pet. 4. 19. *wherefore, let them them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.* I would say to you, pray, that prayer which Christ prayed, when he was upon the cross, *Father into thy hands I commit my spirit.* O, pray that prayer every day, for I say, if God forsake us but one hour, O what a great multitude of sins would we commit, *Act.* 5. 4. *Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men but unto God*, yea, even to God, who is the Judge of all, as if he had said, It was conceived in thine heart and then it was brought forth.

The third consideration is, That the heart is the mother and original of all evil; and if this were believed, no doubt, we would watch with much watchfulness and serious self-examination, likewise I would say, that the not keeping of our hearts, is the cause of many of our walking so profanely as we do; It is impossible for you to walk with God aright, if ye have not your hearts keeped; if ye would keep a good conversation, then keep your hearts, for ye must never at any time trust your hearts, for either one time or another they will turn enemies unto you.

The last consideration is this, it is a most excellent thing for a Christian to keep his heart, would ye win to that commendation that *Solomon* hath, *Prov.* 16. 32. *He that ruleth his spirit, is better than he that taketh a City.* O, then keep your hearts, as if he had said, it is better to conquer that *Modicum*, and little thing the heart, than it is for one to conquer a City.

Now

Now, the second thing that I would speak to from keeping of the heart, is to these disadvantages which is waiting upon the not keeping of it, *Prov.* 25. last verse, *He that hath not rule over his own spirit, is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.* And I would give you these disadvantages which will attend upon these that do not keep their hearts; First, a temptation will soon overcome that person with little difficulty; the devil will not need to use many arguments for the gaining of that persons heart, alace our hearts (many of them by all appearance) is in the devils hands, and that he hath a surer grip of them than we our selves have. Oh, that the devil should have so many of our hearts; and that so many of them should be at his command! O believe it, he is the hardest master, and he is the worst master that ever ye served, and if he once get us within his grips, it will be hard getting out again. These hearts which are not keeped, is all put through other with confusion, like a ruinous City, that wanteth government. Believe it, ye cannot do God a greater service than to keep your hearts well, and the devil would count it a great courtisie done to him, if ye would resign them to him; therefore, see which of them ye will obey. Fourthly, If ye would consider and look what a thing the heart of man is, O, ye would guard it more than ye do; for it is always besieged with the lusts which the devil sets before your eyes; and there is three lusts which the devil doth besiege you with, and be sure they shall all overcome you if ye keep not your hearts. First, *the lust of the eye*; O but that lust hath brought many to his obedience! Secondly, *The lust of the flesh*; O, that hath overcome many; and thirdly, *The pride of life*; O to think how these three enemies hath taken many captives.

Now the next thing which I shall insist a little upon, is, to point out some marks and evidences whether ye have kept your hearts or not.

First, If ye have keeped your hearts aright, ye will endeavour to crucifie vain thoughts: Are there not some here that never knew what it was to crucifie and crush vain and idle thoughts; this was an evidence that *David* kept his heart, *Psal.* 119. 13. *I hate vain thoughts, but thy law do I love.* There is some that repents for outward breakings out of sin, but not for secret sins in their hearts, and be sure these never keeped their hearts. Did ye never read that, *Mat.* 5.8. *Blessed are the poor in heart*? Your sanctification shall never grow so long as ye lodge vain thoughts within your breasts. *O, Jerusalem! how long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee*, saith the Lord? Be careful to think upon such thoughts as ye may answer for one day to the Lord, for your mid-night thoughts shall be read in the hearing of angels and men. O, would ye not be ashamed and loath your selves, if ye would consider these vile and vain thoughts that lodge within many of you.

Secondly, These hearts that is not kept, they imbrace tentations so soon as they are assaulted by them, and they do not take notice that they are temptations, and that is a mark of one that keepeth not his heart, that takes not notice of the devil till he hath shut his temptations within his breast: this is clear that *David* kept not his heart when the devils temptations did so assault him, 2 *Sam.* 11. and got such a victory over him; and it is also clear in the practice of *Peter*, when he denyed his Master thrice, it was a token that he keeped not his heart well.

The third Evidence of one that keepeth not his heart, is, he will commit sin with much deliberation; many of us commit sin after we have been thinking long upon it: hence it is spoken, *That there is some that studies iniquity upon their beds, and when it is light they put it in practice, Mic.* 2.1. and likewise in *Prov.* 6. Amongst these heinous sins that is odious

ous and hateful to God, *wicked imaginations* is reckoned amongst the midst of them, *vers.* 8. I say, ye who sin with much deliberation, ye have losed much of the fear of God, for to sin with deliberation or advisement, is more than to sin against light.

The fourth mark of these that doth not keep their hearts, they sin with much willingness and pleasure; *Ephraim* willingly worshipped the Calves of *Dan* and *Bethel*. Are there not some here whose hearts are following their Idols, and posting hard after them? But O can your Idols do you any good, and purchase pleasure to you one day? and be sure of this, these who sin with such willingness and pleasure, that is a clear evidence that they keep not their hearts well.

The fifth Evidence of a heart that is not keeped, is, when a Christians heart can mis-regard opportunities, in which opportunities communion with God may be attained, it is a token that the Brides heart was not keeped, when she would not rise and open to Christ.

The sixth Evidence, when the heart takes not up the motions of God towards it, that is a token that that mans heart is not well keeped who cannot take up Gods motions: but a Christian whose heart is keeped, he can take up the motions of the Spirit, this is clear, if you compare the second and third Chapters of the *Songs* together.

Lastly, ye may know whether your hearts be keeped or not, and that is, when ye do not discern the decayes of the graces of the spirit within you. There is four graces by which a Christian may know whether he keeps his heart or not. First, If the grace of prayer decay. Secondly, Tenderness. Thirdly, Faith. Fourthly, Love. O, therefore I would desire you to try your graces what condition they are in, lest ye go down to the grave with a mistake in your bosom. Now I shall shut up our discourse with speaking these four things.

First, a Christian ought to keep his heart constantly: The hypocrite hath a sort of keeping of his heart, but he keeps it not so constantly as a real Christian. And there is five times when he especially keeps it, the first time is, when he is under afflictions and Crosses, then he will not let his heart wander from the ways of Gods Commandments, and he will keep his heart mightily at that time. Secondly, He will keep his heart at that time when convictions are sharp and strong upon him, *Acts 2. 37. When they were prickt in their hearts, they cryed out, men and brethren, what shall we do?* amongst which we may conceive there were sundry Hypocrites. The Hypocrite thinks to win through the world, under the notion of a real Saint; but believe it, although ye would win through the world under this notion, (as many doth) yet the day is coming when ye and your practices shall be put to the touch-stone. The third time when the Hypocrite would keep his heart, is, when he is going to the Sacrament of the Communion; but when he is come from it, he will take no notice of his heart any more; and the only reason that he keeps his heart then, is, that he may have peace with a natural conscience, yea, I fear, if we were all searched, it would be known that the most end we pray for, is to satisfie a natural conscience, and not to please God. The fourth time when a Hypocrite will keep his heart, is under sickness and diseases, yea, any gross one will keep his heart in sickness, they who never prayed (almost) will pray at that time. The last time when he will keep his heart, will be when he is called to some publick holy work, as if he were called to pray amongst Christians. O then he will keep his heart diligently! and if he be in a Ministers sight he will keep the Sabbath day; but alace, these men doth not remember that a greater one than a Minister sees him; even God the Lord. A Hypocrite will keep his outward

ward man, but not his inward man: he will not swear, but in his heart he will curse God; he will keep his feet outwardly, but inwardly he will commit adultery in his heart; If ye would be sincere, you must mortifie your invisible idols as wel as your visible idols.

The second thing that I would say, is this, if ye keep your hearts, and not resign them freely to God, although ye were to live eighty years, and if ye would pray the one fourty & weep the other fourty of these years, (if such a thing could be possible) yet all that pains should be for nought, if ye do not freely first give him your heart, for you shall get that fearful sentence pronounced upon you, *Depart from me ye cursed, I knew you never.* O, therefore while it is called to day, give God your hearts: *Psal. 78. 56. Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies*, Psal. 34. 16. *The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut of the remembrance of them from the earth.* If ye had the tongue of an angel to speak and pray, yet if ye give him not your hearts all your prayers shall return back empty to you.

The third thing which I would say to you, is this, the heart of man is a thing which ye will find a great difficulty to keep, and this is a proof of it, that a Christian will even sometimes change in prayer. He will sometimes change four times. First, When he begins, he will be in a flame of love to God. And secondly, he will fall secure. And thirdly, He will have terrible thoughts of God. And lastly, (ere be he have done) he will speak to God as to his companion, and I would pose all of you that are here if ye have not been in all (or most part) of these frames when you have been praying? Now I would charge you (as ye will answer to Christ one day) that ye would give him your hearts; There is two words which I would say to you, and O that ye

would consider upon them, Christ comes and says to us first, *Take up thy Cross and deny thy self, and follow me*: That is Christs first word unto a Believer, and O, but that be a great mystery to flesh and blood. And the Devil comes and says the second word, which is, *fall down and worship me and I will give thee a Kingdom*, The first word of the Devil, is ay the fairest word that ye shall get, and the first of Christs is the sharpest. Now which of these two offers will ye chuse? I would only say these two words to you, First, think ye not shame to refuse Christ so openly as ye do? Secondly, That the answer which ye give him, is not the answer which he seeks, I say, one day ye shall be brought before his throne waiting for your condemnation, if ye give not precious Christ your hearts; ye shall stand before his Tribunal to receive your last & fearful doom: O man, and O woman, with what face wilt thou stand, and what wilt thou have to say when thou stands before him? I remember the word of a cursed Emperor who had made defection from Christ he was forced to breath out his last words thus sadly, *Thou hast overcome me at last, O Galilean*. So he is too strong a party to thee to contend with, and at length he will overcome thee.

Now the last thing that I would say unto you, is, if you do not give him your hearts, (I as the Ambassador of Christ) declare to you, that Christ and you shall fight together! Put on your harness, put on your Steel-coat, (for Christ will be ready for you) and boast when ye put off again. And I would say this unto you, that it is impossible for you to take Christ except ye get a sight of Christ and his beauty, and if you saw him in his beauty, ye would say, I'le take him although I get not a Kingdom: O the Angels and glorified Spirits of just men now made perfect, may wonder at us why we stand out so long? Oh, Will ye give to another your hearts, and

and not to precious Christ, who hath given you his heart, and who is worthy of all your hearts? Can you look upon that noble Plant of Renown, and not give him your hearts, who had a hole made in his side through which ye may see his heart? Oh man, and Oh woman? Why will ye not give Christ your hearts? What shall ye say, when Christ shall say first to you, why would ye not sincerly give me one day in your life time? Secondly, Why would you not give me your hearts? I will tell you three things which will be very terrible for you (O atheist,) in that day when you shall appear before Gods Tribunal. First, the hearing of the Gospel. Secondly, Which is more terrible, the Resurrection of Christ. Lastly, Which is terrible of all; when that fearful sentence shall be pronounced against you, *Depart, Depart*, O then you shall curse the day that ever ye were born in *Glasgow* or in *Scotland*, Now, O you Inhabitants of this place, I charge you (as ye shall answer one day to God) that ye would give him your hearts in keeping, and in so doing, ye shall have life eternal; O therefore, *Kiss the Son by the way lest his anger break out, and ye perish for ever*; Now to him who can perswade your hearts to imbrace him, we desire to give praise.

SERMON VII.

Prov. 4. 23. *Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.*

THere is a great and vast difference betwixt the heart of a Christian while he is on earth, here below, travelling in these Tents of mortalitie; and the heart of a christian when he shall be above, taking up his eternal possession in those blessed and everlasting Tents of Immortalitie: And O, is it not a mysterie for you to believe, that such a day is approaching, when those hearts of yours which

seen so unstedfast in the ways of Godliness, that they shall once be *made as pillars in the house of your God, and no more to go out*, we may compare the heart of a Christian (while he is here below) unto *Reuben*, it is *unstable as water, which doth marre its excellency*; For a Christian (while he is here below) he is like the moon, changeable, & subject to many vicissitudes, but when he shall be above, he shall be as the Sun, *having the light of seven days*; and is not this a mystery for you to believe that such a day is approaching. when these hearts of yours that have wearied so much in the service of God, to whom prayer hath been a crosse, to whom the worshipping of God in the publick Ordinances hath been a burden; I say, is it not a mystery for you to believe that such a day isapproaching, *when ye shall serve God night and day without any wearying*: There is not such a voice heard in heaven as this, *this is a hard saying, who can bear it?* If it were possible that ye could ask that question at *Abel*, if he desire to change his estate, or is wearying to do God service (he who of all the lost posterity of *Adam* was the first inhabitant of heaven) he would disdain to return an answer to such a question, it being without all ground or reason: And is not this a mystery for you to believe, that such a day is approaching, when these hearts of yours that are now under so much darkness, such misconstructions of God, such misconceptions of the holy Majesty of God, and of the great mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. I say, is it not a mystery for you to believe that such a day is approaching when your hearts shall be fully taught to comprehend those depths, and profound secrets of the Kingdom of God, when the most brutish and darkest understanding that shall be made to resolve that question and mystery, how three can be in one, and how one can be in three? They shall then be able to resolve that profound mystery of the two natures in the

the person of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ; and in that day your hearts shall be able to comprehend that blessed union that is amongst the Persons of the blessed Trinity; and likewise in that day ye shall be able to take up that blessed knot of union which is betwixt Christ and Believers: And is not this a mystery for you to believe that such a day is approaching, when your hearts that hath been under such exercise of sorrow, that they shall be cloathed with the garment of joy and praise? And I would ask at you, O what a robe must that be, to be cloathed with the garments of praise? It is a more excellent and glorious robe than all the robes of the great Kings and Emperours of the world. Did your eyes ever see such an excellent garment, as the garment of praise? There is a three-fold cloathing which a christian shall put on when first his heart shall enter into heaven, in that blessed day of the resurrection; First, he shall be cloathed with the robe of the righteousness of Christ, and, O what must such a robe as this be? Secondly, he shall be cloathed with the robe and garment of immortality; and, O what a robe and resplendent garment shall this be? And thirdly, in that day when first a christian shall enter into heaven, he shall be cloathed with the garment of praise; and, O what an excellent and glorious robe shall all these be? *When ye shall be brought to the King in rayment of needle work, and shall be made all glorious within.*

At the last occasion when we spoke upon these words, we told you that there was four things contained in them; and the first was a duty imposed upon Christians, that they should keep their hearts: the second thing was, that there is many spiritual enemies who studies to gain, and conquer our hearts, which is presupposed in these words, *Keep thy heart*. The third thing is the qualifications which should

be annexed to this precious and soul concerning duty, holden forth in these words. *Keep thy heart with all diligence*, or as the words may be rendered, with all keeping, or above all keeping. The last thing which was contained in the words, was, the spiritual advantages, which attends the exercises of that duty, or the reasons enforcing the duty, *for out of it are the issues of life*, that is the ground on which a Christian should walk in perswading himself to the doing of this duty. Now as for the first thing, *viz.* the duty commanded, that we should keep our hearts: We have spoken several things from it, now there are only five things which we would speak to.

First, a Christian should study to keep his heart from the predominant lusts which dwells in it, it is of the concernment of a Christian to keep himself from all iniquities, but it is of the special concernment of a Christian to keep his heart from his predominant sins; this was the practice of *David*, *Psal.* 18. 23. *I have kept my self from mine iniquity*, which we conceive to be understood of his predominant lusts. There is not an idol or lust which a Christian hath in his heart, but he ought to offer it up to God; and to put a knife to the throat of his most pleasant *Isaac*, I will tell you of five great idols which a Christian hath no will to quite, and it is impossible for him to keep his heart till he quite them. First, a Christian hath no will to quite his religious idols, that is, those idols, the loving of which is a commanded duty; but the immoderate love of which is an idol: as for instance, it is a great difficulty for a tender *Abraham* to put a knife to the throat of his only son *Isaac*, or for Parents to be denyed to their children, and for a husband to be denyed to his wife, the loving of which is their duty, but the immoderate love of them is sin. Secondly, a Christian hath ill will to quite his advantagious idol, that idol in pursuit of which

which, he conceives there is outward advantage to be waiting upon it: as for instance, it is a great difficulty to perswade a covetous man to be denyed to his riches. O, but that divinity which is in *Prov.* 23. 4. It is the divinity which the most part (or at least many) of the Christians now adays, doth not study to close with or obey; *Labour not to be rich*, &c. There is a greater easiness and facility for one to quite his pleasant idols, than to quite his advantagious idols; as for example, a covetous person will sooner forsake his lusts nor his riches. Thirdly, a Christian hath ill will to quite his invisible idols, these idols that doth lodge within his heart, there is a greater easiness for a Christian to quite his visible than to quite his invisible idols; Sometimes a person will forsake his drunkenness and cursing, which will not forsake his pride and lust, but it is of your concernment, to be as much taken up in the mortification of invisible idols, as in the mortification of visible idols. Fourthly, a Christian hath difficulty to quite these idols which he hath a natural inclination unto, besides the love which we have contracted to some predominant idols, by the reason of the constitution of mans body: there is some that hath a natural inclination to one idol more than to another; and to clear this, I would say this unto you, I presuppose some under these three predominant lusts. 1. That there is some under the predominant idol of love to the world. 2. That there is some under the predominant idol of pride. 3. That there is some under the predominant idol of lust, that is the [illegible] that you have most natural inclination unto; [illegible]ly you have greatest unwillingness to mortifie [illegible] idol. Fifthly, a Christian hath much difficulty to [illegible]tifie that idol, the forsaking of which hath great [illegible]ward disadvantage waiting upon the forsaking [illegible] of; as that young man in the Gospel, he [illegible]

not endure that Doctrine, *Go and sell all that thou hast, and give it to the poor*, &c. That was an idol which had much disadvantage (as he conceived) attending upon the forsaking of it, so that he could not imbrace such a doctrine, but it is said, *He went away sorrowful*, &c. cursed be that person which goeth away sorrowful, when Christ and an idol is put in the ballance together, and whose hearts consents rather to take the idol than Christ: I would only say this by the way to you. Are there not many here, that if they would tell that which is their practice, they might condemn themselves for this, that absence and distance with Christ was never so great a burden to their spirits as the want of the actual enjoyments and fruition of an idol: and doth not this speak that ye prefer your idols before Christ? *not this man, but Barrabas*, is the cursed divinity of many of your hearts.

The second thing which I would speak to you, is this, a christian should not delay to give obedience to this precious and soul concerning command of keeping his heart: I know there are some that doth not simply deny obedience to this command, but they postpone the giving obedience unto it untill another time. I would only say this to such, *Boast not of to morrow, for ye know not what a day will bring forth*: If ye keep not your hearts to day, it will be a great difficulty for you to keep them to morrow; therefore follow the practice of *David*, *I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments*, Psal. 119. 60. Amongst which we conceive he made haste to keep this commandment of keeping his heart.

Thirdly, We would say this unto you of the duty of keeping your hearts, if ye would keep your hearts [illegible] ye must entertain these four noble and excellent guests within your hearts, otherwise there will be [illegible] difficulty for you; yea, an impossibility for

to keep them. The first guest that must be dwelling in your hears is our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, he must dwell in your hearts by Faith. Secondly, the word of God must dwell in your hearts by love; and if once ye hide his word in your hearts, then ye would be helped to keep your hearts, and that with much advantage and gain. Thirdly, if ye would keep your hearts, the love of God must dwell in them, and if these were, indeed, your attainments, then we might pronounce that sentence upon you, *The peace of God that passeth all understanding, shall keep*, (as in a garison) *Your hearts and minds in Jesus Christ.* 4. Ye should keep the fear and dread of God within your hearts. Study to live under the divine apprehension of the Omnipotent Majesty of God; we conceive the little taking up of the Omnisciency of God, of the Omnipotency of God, and of the terrors of God, hath a great and especial influence upon your neglect of the duty of keeping your hearts.

Fourthly, There is this which we would speak from this duty of keeping the heart, and it is this. We shall propose several things that ye would endeavor by all means, to keep your hearts from them. First, a Christian would study to keep his heart from the deceits thereof, and from these strong delusions that it speaks: This is the great mysterie of iniquitie, that even our hearts will deceive our own hearts, and study to bring them to ruine: *Take heed ye deceive not your selves, &c.* saith *Jeremiah*, or as the word may be rendered, take heed ye deceive not your souls, 1 *Cor.* 3. 18. *Let no man deceive himself, &c.* and *Gal.* 6. 7. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for what a man soweth that shall he also reap.* It is certain there are many soul-destroyers, and self-deceivers amongst us, their hearts speak peace to them, when there is no peace to them from God; and in speaking to this, that a Christian should keep his heart from the deceivings

of his own heart. I shall speak a little to two things; 1. what are these deceits that lodges in the heart of man

And there is this first deceit of the heart of man, the most sinful thing that can be; we can put a favorable title and name upon it, and there are few sins which any are lying under, but they can put a favorable title upon them; Do not many call their presumptions faith? Are there not many that call security peace? Are there not many that call passion zeal? are there not many that call their lukewarmness, and indifferency in things of Godliness, their spiritual wisdom? And are there not many that cal their misbelief humility? Are there not many who call their vain prodigality mortification to the things of a World? And likewise, are there not many which call their worldly mindedness, frugality? This was the deceit of *Jehu*, that called his proud loving of a Kingdom zeal: *Come see*, saith he, *and behold my zeal for the Lord*, whereas if he had spoken the language of his own heart, he might have said, *Behold my zeal for my self.*

Secondly, There is this deceit of the heart of man, that the most excellent and choice things of God, our heart, can put an unpleasant name & construction upon them, as for instance, are there not many who call tenderness hypocrisie? and are not many who call humility of spirit stupidity? and are there not many who call zeal for God rashness? This was the cause that caused *Ahaz* fall, he called believing in God, tempting of God: *I will not tempt God*, saith he, while in the mean time he was pressed to faith in God; it is a cursed practice in the hearts of many, they put a false robe upon godliness, and studies then to flee from it, just like the practice of the Jews, they put a *scarlet robe upon Christ, and then mocked him.*

There is this third deceit of the heart of many, that it doth present as impediments and diversions to hinder us from the exercise of duty, I would pose you, O Chri-

Christians, when went ye to duty, but there was something that your hearts proposed a diversion from the exercise of that duty? this is clear, *Prov.* 26. 13. *The sloathful man saith, there is a Lion in the way, a Lioness in the streets*: he presents to himself an imaginary impediment to divert him from his duties; which words points out the folly of the excuse, seeing there uses not to be Lions in the streets, nor in the high ways, they frequenting more in solitary and desert places; this is also clear in *Song* 5. 3. where the carnal and secure heart of the spouse, when she is called to open to Christ, she presents this impediment, *I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?* I shall only in speaking of these impediments, which our cursed hearts doth propose to divert us from duty, instance them in the exercise of prayer, that our heart doth propose several impediments to divert us from that precious and soul-concerning duty of prayer, and I shall name five impediments which our cursed and carnal hearts doth present to hinder us from that duty, after God hath presented to us a golden opportunity for doing of the duty.

First, Our carnal heart doth propose this impediment, O say ye, I am not in a praying frame, and so I must desist from this duty of prayer at this time. I would say to such that desist from prayer, because they are not in a praying frame, these two words; First, Do ye suppose the way to attain to a praying frame is to desist from prayer? should ye not go to prayer, that ye may be helped to win to a praying frame. 2. Do ye never go to prayer but when ye are in a praying frame. I suppose ye pray not once in a week then, and it is much if ye pray once in a month, if ye pray not but when ye are in a praying frame.

The second impediment is, our hearts tells us, It will be more advantage not to pray, than to pray sometimes,

times a Christian will be under that conviction, that he doth more offend God in praier, than in desisting from Praier, and upon that account we do fold our hands, and neglects this dutie. First, I would say this to such, it is indeed a sad and afflicting thing, the offending of God so much in praier, but it is far sadder to give over prayer. Secondlie, I would say this to such, I can hardlie believe that ever ye can offend God so much in praier, as by the total neglect of that dutie.

There is this hard impediment which our hearts doth propose to divert us from duties, and especially from the exercise and dutie of praier, we argue thus with our selves, we are not under the sensible necessitie of what we need; and so we say, we will not go to God at this time, for if we pray under such a case, we will turn but complementers with God, we will but flatter him with our mouth, and lie to him with our tongue. I would say this to such, the best way to bring up your hearts to the sensible conviction of your necessitie, is to be much in the exercise of praier, a Christian must pray for sorrow of sin, if he want it, a christian must pray for sense of necessity, if he want it; & a Christian must pray for tenderness, when he wants it. Praier is the universal messenger which we must constantlie send to God for the supplie of all our necessities: There is not a case which a Christian can be in, but praier may go to God as a messenger for a remedie to such a case, when he stands in need.

The fourth impediment which our carnal hearts proposeth to divert us from praier, is, our hearts are not under one right majestick apprehension of God, and so ye say, if we go to praier at this time, we will be guiltie of the third command, *in taking his holy name in vain.* If we go to praier at this time, saith our deceiving hearts, we will but run our selves into that sin, *to speak to God as to our companion*, I confess it is a sad thing to go to God without some divine ex-

expression of his soveraigntie, and Majestie; and would say this to you, I think it is one of the most sad and undeniable evidence of the little grace of God which is in the hearts of many, that constantly in their praiers they speak to God as to their companion; but I would ask this question at you, When went ye to praier but ye might find your hearts short-coming in the due apprehension of the Majestie of God.

The last impediment which our carnal hearts doth propose, to divert us from the exercise of praier, is this We say (many of us) that it is an inconvenient time for the exercise of that dutie, therefore our hearts saith, that we should delay the time of praying till a more convenient season, according to that practice in *Hag.* 1. 2. *The time is not come, the time that the Lords house should be built.* It is the cursed practice of our hearts, that when God presents an occasion to pray, we delay praying at that time under the expectation of a more convenient season for going about that dutie; just like that word which *Felix* spoke to *Paul*, we speak that to our occasion; O, occasion that is presented to me, to pray in, *Go away at this time, and at a more convenient season I will call for thee again*: I would say this to these which doth so much slight the opportunities presented to them to pray: I would only say these three words unto you, who doth so; First, What know ye, even ye which slight the call of God to go about prayer? What know ye, I say, but that may be the last call from heaven that ever ye shall get to pray? I would have Christians, and all of you that are here, meditating upon this, that when occasion is presented to you, ye might argue thus with your selves, I must imbrace this occasion, for I know not but this may be the last occasion. Secondlie, I would say this to you which slights occasions to pray, when the next occasion is presented to you, ye will be more unfit for the exercise of

praier

prayer; and when the convenient time that ye did propose to your selves is come, ye will then defer it till another time. Thirdly, I would say this unto you who slights these golden opportunities that are presented to you to pray in, know this for a certainty the slighting of occasions is a disobedience to the commandment of God, would ye know what are occasions to pray? they are even Gods call, inviting you to go about that duty, and if you slight that occasion, the call of God is slighted by you.

There is this fourth deceit of the heart of man, which we would press you to study to eshew, and it is, the heart of man studies by all means to extenuate sin, and make it seem little when it is not so, this is one of the great deceits of the heart, according to that of *Solomon*, *So is the man that deceiveth his neighbour*, and he will add that as an excuse, *was I not in sport?* I will tell you three great faults which are incident to Christians. First, There are some that look upon their perfections through a multiplying glass, their perfections appear to be more than they are, the Church of *Laodicea* was guilty of this fault, supposing her self to have attained to much perfection and to great length in duties, when indeed she had attained to nothing. Secondly, There is some, they look upon their sins, through an extenuating glass, they are like the unjust Steward, when they owe an hundred Talents, they go and write down fifty. Thirdly, their iniquities which they are convinced of, and are forced to charge upon themselves, they study to extenuate them, and saith, *Is it not a little one?* and so they desire it to be spared.

The last deceit of the heart is, the heart doth oftentimes preach peace, when there is no peace from God. I am perswaded of this, let all the persons that are within these doors, be asked of that question, whether or not they have faith in God, or peace with God?

God? I suppose there are not many, but their hearts would say, they have peace with God: O that is a damnable deceit of the heart, that oftentimes it preaches peace to a man or woman, where there is no peace to them from God. I shall only to make this deceit to appear more lively in its native colours, say this of it. First, That it is a most mysterious and strong deceit of the heart that will so speak peace to a man, sometimes the word will speak war to a man, and yet his heart will speak peace to him? And O, is not that a mysterious deceit, that I suppose if an Angel from Heaven, would preach that Doctrine to you, that there is no peace betwixt God and you, many of your hearts would (for all that) preach and speak peace to your selves. And secondly, this makes it a most mysterious deceit, that sometimes your consciences doth declare and preach to you that you are not at peace with God, yet over the belly of that assertion, your hearts will preach peace to you. Thirdly, this makes it a most mysterious deceit, that notwithstanding your lives and conversations, that they testifie to your selves and others that you are at enmitie with God, yet your hearts will preach peace to you.

Now the second thing that we would say to you from this, *viz.* That a Christian should keep his heart from the deceivings of his own heart, and it is this, ye would mainly guard this, ye would mainly guard against discouragements, this our blessed Lord Jesus presses, *John* 14. 1. *Let not your hearts be troubled*, &c. And it is clear, this is dehorted, *Phil.* 4. 6. *Be careful for nothing*, &c. and in *Psal.* 42. *David* doth (as it were) expostulate with his own soul for being discouraged and cast down. Now in speaking to this, that a Christian should guard against discouragements. I shall speak unto two things, and the first shall be to the rise of discouragements,

and

and from whence it doth spring. And secondly, I shall speak to some considerations to press this upon you that ye would keep your selves from discouragement.

And first, we conceive that discouragement it arises from this, when a Christian hath no visible victory over his idols, then his discouragement comes apace upon him: A Christian after long wrestling with his idols, lusts and corruptions, and hath little victory over them, he is prone, and ready to draw that sad conclusion, *There is no hope, but that once he shall fall by the hand of some of his idols.*

The second rise of discouragement, is, from Christs withdrawing of the sensible manifestations of his love, and of his presence, *Psal.* 30. 7. *Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.* And it is clear, in the practice of the disciples, the withdrawing of Christs bodily presence, *it made sorrow to fill their hearts.* I confess there are not many which are sick of the disease of discouragement under absence with Christ, but however, it hath been the reason of his own discouragement, when Christ for many days had absented himself from them.

Thirdly, this is the rise of discouragement, when a Christian hath no return of his prayers, *Lam.* 3. 8. compared with *verse* 18. where in *verse* 8. he crys out, *when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer*, and *verse* 18. he draws that sad conclusion, *my hope and my strength is perished from the Lord*, The not getting returns of prayer hath been an occasion of much disputing the good will of God, and a foundation of much discouragement to his own people.

Fourthly this is the rise of discouragement, when a Christian doth interpret the sad and afflicting dispensations of God, and he conceives that there is nothing but wrath speaking to him therein; then he falleth into a great fit of discouragement, as in *Lam.* 3. 17. compared with *verse* 18. where the rise of his

his discouragement was the misinterpreting of the sad dispensations of God.

Fifthly, This is the *Rise* of a Christians discouragement, *when he is made to possess the iniquities of his youth, and all the terrors of God seemeth to be called as in a solemn Assembly round about him.* O, then he taketh on a great fit of discouragement.

Now to that which secondly we shall speak to, is, to propose some considerations unto you to guard against discouragement.

The first shall be this, these that have a heart that is under the spirit of bondage and discouragement they cannot pray as they ought, discouragment makes prayer a most unpleasant duty, as is clear, *Psal.* 77. *I am so troubled that I cannot speak*, Discouragement (as it were) hinders and obstructs the exercise of prayer. Secondly, Discouragement doth exceedingly interrupt the exercise of faith, as in *Psal.* 42. *Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou discouraged within me? trust in God, for I shall yet praise him for the health of his countenance.* The Psalmist (as it were) speaks a difference (if not an opposition) betwixt the disquieting and faith. If we would not interrupt the lively acting of Faith, ye would study to guard against discouragement, that ye do not sit down and draw desperate conclusions against your selves. I know ye may call a christian *Marah* now; because he is indeed under bitterness; but the day is approaching when we may call a christian *Naomi*, when he shall be comforted with the consolations of God.

The third consideration to press you to guard against discouragement, is, there is no duty that a Christian is called to when he is under discouragement, but it makes it a burthen to him, according to the word, *Jer.* 20. 9. discouragement brought forth the resolution, then I said, *I will not make mention of him,*

him, nor speak any more in his Name, &c. A soul that is under the exercise of Faith, moves swiftly as the Chariots of *Aminadab*, but a soul that is under the exercise of discouragement, moves as the Chariots of *Pharaoh*, heavily.

Lastly, there is this consideration, to press you to guard against discouragement, and it is this, misbelief and discouragement is the mother of Apostacy, as is clear, *Lam.* 1. 8. *she sighed*, and what followed upon? *and turneth backward*, and it is no wonder discouragement grow big with child of Apostacy, because it makes duties become tasteless.

Now the rest of the things which we would have a Christian keeping his heart from, we shall only but name them briefly unto you. The third frame that a Christian should keep his heart from, is from an impatient frame, he should study to make his heart keep silence to any cross that comes to him from the hand of God. Fourthly, he should keep his heart from a lusting frame, not to be taken up in an immoderate pursuit after the things of the world. Fifthly, he should keep his heart from an untender frame, he should study always to keep his heart tender, that he may have that divine softness, that his heart may melt; likewise, he is to keep his heart from an unpraying frame, to be at every occasion in a fit temper of spirit, for the duty of prayer. Lastly, he is to keep his heart from a secure frame, always to be upon the watch tower, and wait for the motions of Christ: and there are three things, the motions of which a Christian should take up. First, he should take up the motions of Christ, to hear if he can take up the motions of the sound of Christs feet coming over the mountains of *Bether*. Secondly, He should take up the motions of his conscience, that he may not be sleeping when sin awakes. Thirdly, He should take up the motions of the heart, to see what frame it is in;

in; A christian should be able to write a diurnal of his own heart, that in such an hour of such a day, I was in a believing frame, and in such an hour of such a day I was in a discouraged frame, and in such an hour of such a day, I sought him whom my soul loveth, and in such an hour of such a day he brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love. The sume of all is, if ye would keep your hearts ye must give Christ them to keep, for that is the best way to keep them well, it is only to Christ ye must commit the keeping of them. Ye know man had but his heart a short time in keeping, and he lost it; and I shall before I close, because it is the great design of the preaching of the Gospel, give you five considerations that may provoke you to give your hearts to Christ.

The first consideration is, will ye consider the matchless and transcendent excellency which is in precious Christ; O, doth not that transcendent beauty preach, *My son give me thy heart, Psal.* 24. 7. The Psalmist presseth opening to Christ upon this account, *Lift up your heads, O ye everlasting doors and gates*, And what is the argument wherewith he presseth it, *and the King of Glory shall come in.* I would only ask this at you (O ye hard hearted) is it not marvellous presumption for you to refuse the precious offers of such a glorious King?

The second consideration to press you to give your hearts in keeping to Christ, take a view and a comprehensive look of the precious acts of the infinite condescentions of Christ: Doth not his coming down from heaven, preach that Doctrine, *My son give me thy heart*? Doth not his being born under the Law, preach that doctrine, *My son give me thy heart*? And doth not his being born in so low a condition, preach that doctrine, *My son give me thy heart*? And if nothing will perswade you to give

your hearts to Christ, ye would take a look of those five wounds which he received in his blessed body; First, doth not the wound that he received in his right hand preach this, *My son, give me thy heart*? Secondly, doth not the wound that he got in his left hand, preach this Doctrine, *My son, give me thy heart?* Thirdly, doth not the wound that he received in his precious sides, preach this soul concerning doctrine, *My son, give me thy heart?* And likewise, doth not the wounds which he received in his blessed legs, preach this doctrine, *My son, give me thy heart?* O, were ye never constrained to wish for ten thousand hearts, to ware and bestow them upon him? Oh! What hearts have ye, which refuses the offers of so noble and condescending a Prince?

The third consideration is, if ye will look upon these things which intreats you to give Christ your hearts, ye cannot but give them unto him. Christ says, O, come and give me your hearts, necessity says, O, go and give Christ your hearts: and we say likewise. O give Christ your hearts to keep.

The fourth consideration is, Will ye look upon these unspeakable disadvantages which attends those that will not give their hearts to Christ. I would say this by the way, there are two ballances upon which men weigh our hearts, First, some weighs their hearts in the ballance of the Sanctuary, and they are found light. Secondly, Some weighs their hearts in the ballance of deceit, and they are found without fault: I now say this to the person which will not give their hearts to Christ, I defy all the angels in heaven to speak forth their unspeakable disadvantages, yea, I shall be the best preacher of it in that day: and I name these three inexpressible disadvantages to you. First, if ye give not Christ your hearts, Christ is your eternal enemy: and in the contrair to his precious doctrine which he once preached, *Come*

Come unto me, he shall pronounce that sad sentence against you, *Depart from me*; and therefore as ye would not engage Christ to be your eternal enemy, ye would give him your hearts. O, the Gospel vengeance of a crucified Saviour, will be more terrible, sad and fearful, than the vengeance of the Law, Christ is the best friend, and the most terrible foe. The second disadvantage is, ye shall be eternally shut out from the enjoyment of the blessed company of Angels, and from the souls of just men made perfect; and O, therefore meditate and consider upon this, what it is to be separated from the Father, the first person of the blessed Trinity, and from the Son, the second person of the blessed Trinity; and from the Holy Ghost, the third person of the blessed Trinity; and from all the blessed Society which are in heaven. And the last disadvantage is, ye shall be kept under these everlasting chains, even all of you which will not give your hearts to Christ. If ye be not under the everlasting chain of love, ye shall be under these everlasting chains of wrath. I suppose if the most stout hearted sinner here, if he could but a moment hear the screechings of the damned (if it were granted to him) he would not delay to give his heart to Christ.

The last *Consideration* is, O consider these infinite, eternal and unchangeable advantages that those have which gives their hearts to Christ, we conceive if all the Angels in heaven would preach together upon the unspeakable blessedness of the Saints in heaven, they would always close their sentences with this, the unspeakable joy which attends those that are admitted to that blessed life. There are five things that are unchangeable to christians, and five things that are unchangeable to reprobats. There is this which is unchangeable to the Saints: (I mean here their communion with God shall be unchangeable

able; for after they shall win to heaven, they shall be under a continual and blessed emanation of Christs presence. Secondly, they shall have an unchangeable love. A christians love while he is here, is like unto the Moon, subject to many vicissitudes, and alterations; but afterward when they shall be in heaven, their love shall be unchangeable. Thirdly, His holiness shal then be unchangeable when once he shall put on the robe of Christs righteousness: he shall then sing that song, *O death, where is thy sting? And O grave where is thy victory?* Fourthly, praise to God shall be unchangeable; O, what a pleasant sight shall it be to see the souls of just men made perfect, with harps in their hands singing these pleasant songs unto God most sweetly? *Hallelujah to him that sits on the throne, and to the Lamb which lives for ever; their tongue is made like the pen of a ready writer*, there is not such a complaint uttered by *Moses* in heaven, *I am a man of slow speech*, neither doth *Jeremiah* now complain, *I am a child, and cannot speak*. Fifthly, desires after God shall be unchangeable; a christian while he is here below, will desire God now, and within a little while he will desire his idols, but then when he shal be above, his desires after God shall be unchangeable.

And upon the contrary there are five things unchangeable in the lot of a reprobate, and of these that will not give Christ their hearts. First, their separation from God shall be unchangeable, when once they shall go down into the pit, there shall be no hope of coming up again: Ah, ye would think on this, what a life shall it be to be under the eternal incommunication from Christs presence? O but ye knew Christ, and believed what a one he were, would close with him? 2. The reprobate shall have unchangeable sorrow, O he may be sad when the presence of God shall be squizing the marrow out of his

his bones, and when he is eternally shut up in these horrible flames, and out of them to have no redemption? 3. Reprobates, they shall have an unchangeable hatred against God, and God shall have an unchangeable against them, and I cannot wish a greater misery to any, than for Christ to have an unchangeable hatred against them. Fourthly, ye that are aliens from God, ye shall sin unchangeably, ye shall never cease to sin, and ye shall never cease to be tormented; on these two eternity shall be spent. Lastly, Your inward anxiety and tortering of conscience shall be unchangeable, that worm shall never die, but shall eternally gnaw your conscience.

Now what shall we say more? we have set life and death before you, and whither of them will ye imbrace? O that ye would imbrace Christ, even precious Christ, and give over your hearts to that blessed Lord! It is like in these days, that the devil hath purchased many Harpers to himself, to sing that song, *I am not far from victory*: the curse of a crucified Saviour shall eternally come down upon the head of these that will not give their hearts to Christ, and upon you that will give or hath given your hearts to Christ, the eternal blessing of Christ shall come upon your hearts. Behold, the day is coming (O Atheist) that ye would give ten thousand worlds for one invitation of the Gospel again; and ye would be content to abide ten thousand years in hell for one preaching, and it shall be denyed to you! O, therefore do not withstand Christs offers: take him, ye will not have him for a look: and know, that if ye will not have him now, his heart shall burn with hatred against you, and one day ye shall curse your cursed hearts for the hatred ye bare to him. Now to him who commands you to imbrace his offer, be praise.

SERMON VIII.

Micah 6. 9. *The Lords voice cryeth unto the City, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name, hear ye the Rod and who hath appointed it.*

IT is a question that is hard to determine, whether the greatness of God, or the condescendency of God be the greatest Mystery; but O! when both these are put together, they make up a matchless mystery. What is more dreadful than power which cannot be resisted? and what is more terrible than wisdom from which nothing can be hid? And yet what is more sweet, than the love wherewith he hath loved us, and the unchangeableness thereof, which doth put off all suspition? I would only say this unto you, God hath been speaking to you diverse ways, and by different things, and as the Apostle speaks, *There are many voices in the world, and every voice hath its own signification.* Sol may say, there is not a voice by which God speaks to you that needs to be a *Barbarian speaking in an unknown tongue.*

I confess it is sad, that when God condescends to speak unto us so many different ways, that there should be so many which should stop their ears; are there not some to whom Christ hath *piped*, and they have not *danced?* And now he is beginning to *mourn* for us, and oh, will ye not *lament?* I would say this to you, the day may be approching when *Glasgows* Rods shall be preachers, and its crosses teachers from the street. Yea, God is beginning to preach that word to you, which is in *Jer.* 2. 31. *O Generation, see the word of the Lord, &c.* If ye will not hearken to the voice and mouth of his preachers, he will send more severe preacher unto you, and ye shall be forced to hear his voice. I say, look that the contempt of Christ in his Rods, in his Ordinances, and in his Messengers, make not this place an *Aceldama*; a field

field of bloud, and a *Golgotha*, the place of dead mens skulls. I say to you, the day may be approaching when ye shall meet with these six silent things from God; First, when ye shall meet with silent Rods, when ye shall not know nor understand the language of them, when they shall speak to you in strange and profound language which ye shall not understand. Secondly, when ye shall meet with a silent God, when ye shall cry to him and he shall not hear you. Thirdly, when you shall meet with silent and dumb Ordinances, which shall not speak unto you.

Fourthly, when ye shall meet with silent mercies, that all the good things he doth unto you, ye shall not know the language of them. Fifthly, when you shall meet with the sad lot of a silent conscience, when ye shall not be reproved by it, when ye sin, but God shall not give you leave to fall and depart, and not to return. And lastly, when ye shall meet with silent commands, with silent threatnings, and with silent promises, that is, ye shall never know what the promise calls for, what the threatnings calls for, nor what the commands call for, when he shall chastise you in the dark, and there shall be none to deliver you, and when there shall be none to plead your cause, but a sin revenging God entering the list with you, when he shall say to them that are left, do not pray for this people, nor intercede for them, for they are the people upon whom I will have no mercy. I may say by all appearance, our judgement do speak this. He hath spoken to us in the still voice of the Gospel, and he hath spoken to us in the whirlwind, and yet he is in none of them: But what if ye but God may the next time speak to you, and shut himself in a circle of fire; I have sometimes said that word to you, *Awake, awake, O sleepers, arise upon your God.*

But to come to the words, in this Cha-

Prophet hath been leading a ſad proceſs againſt this people, for the neglect of duties which were lying at the door, and now we have in this verſe the concluſion of it, and the ſcope whereof is this, ſhewing the people that the Lord would ſend a more ſharp paſſage if they will not obey. And in it there are four things conſiderable.

Firſt, We have an excellent exhortation given to hear the rod, and by it, is not only meaned to take up what the Rod ſpeaks, but alſo, *Who hath appointed it.*

Secondly, There is that excellent conſideration to preſs them unto it, it is *the Lords voice*, we may ſay that of the Rod, which was ſaid of *Herod* in another *ſenſe, it is the voice of God, and not of man.*

Thirdly, We have the people to whom the Exhortation is given; and it *is unto the City*, that is, to *Samaria*, and to the bordering Towns thereabout, now the reaſon why the Lords voice cryeth unto the City rather than to the Countrey, the reaſon of it is either this, the City ordinarily hath moſt eminent tokens of the mercies and reſpects of God, which being abuſed makes God eſpecially to contend with them, or elſe becauſe of this; ordinarily moſt prophanity is broached within the City, and doth vent it ſelf thence into the Countrey, according to that word vvhich is ſpoken of *Jeruſalem, that from it prophanity goes out unto the Countrey or whole Land.*

The fourth thing in the vvords, is the perſons that ſhall hear the voice of the Rod, the Lords voice, and that is, *The man of wiſdom ſhall ſee thy Name*, or as the vvords may be rendered, the man of ſubſtance, or of ſubſtantial Wiſdom; vvhich ſpeaks, that it is one of the greateſt follies that is imaginable, not to hear the voice of the Lord, and his threatning Rod.

The laſt thing in the vvords, is the vvay hovv the man of vviſdom vvins to the right uſe-making and understanding the voice of the Rod, and it is by ſeeing his Name, novv by the name of God may be either underſtood, the ſeeing of the Authority of God in his threatnings; or by the Name of God may be underſtood, His Wiſdom, His Peace, His Povver, His Juſtice, His Soveraignty, and His Holineſs, the man of Wisdom ſhall ſee theſe five excellent attributes of God ſhining into the Rod, and in every ſad diſpenſation vvhich he meets vvith, and the reaſon of uſing that expreſſion, *he ſhall ſee*, is to point out theſe certain and diſtinct diſcoveries vvhich the man of vviſdom ſhall have by ſuch a croſs.

Novv having thus made plain the vvords unto you, there are three things vvhich vve ſhall ſpeak a little unto from the ſcope, before vve come to the firſt thing in the vvords.

The firſt thing vvhich vve ſhall take notice of from the ſcope, is this, That the ſlighting of knovvn duties is the fore-runner of ſome ſad and lamentable ſtroke from the Lord upon a perſon or people, theſe things vvhich they knovv to be duties, and yet they ſlight and diſobey them, I ſay, it is the fore-runner of ſome ſad and eminent act of the diſpleaſure of God to that perſon or people. This is clear, *Luke* 12. 47. *That ſervant which knoweth his Lords will, and prepareth not himſelf, neither doth according to his will, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes.* And that word in *Jer.* 5. *I will get me unto the great men, and will ſpeak unto them, for they have known the way of the Lord; and the judgement of their God, &c.* yet it is ſaid of them, *they have altogether broken the yoak, and burſt the bonds.* And what follows? *verſe* 6. *wherefore a Lion out of the Forreſt ſhall ſlay them*, Rom. 1. 21. Where they profeſſed themſelves to know, *and they glorifie him not as God.* This is given as a reaſon, *That he gave them up to a reprobate mind to do things not convenient.* It is proba-

impiety and profanity of people is come to a wonderful height; when they can sin against light and knowledge. Now in speaking of this more fully, I shall speak to some aggravations of the sin of slighting known duties.

The first *Aggravation* is, when a person slights duty after the sinfulness of that sin hath been discovered unto him, and ingraven on his conscience. O, that is a mighty aggravation of that sin, This is clear, *Hos.* 5. 2. *And the revolters are profound to make slaughter, though I have been a rebuker of them all.* Neh. 9. 29. *and have testified against them, yet they dealt proudly, and hearkned not to thy commandments, but sinned against thy judgements,* I confess, sinning against convictions of conscience (especially when they are sharp) is a greater sin than to sin against light, this indeed to sin with a lifted up hand, and not to blush, nor be ashamed, nor yet to be afraid to commit iniquity. Know now therefore, there are many that slight known duties, notwithstanding of, and the convictions of conscience which they had for doing so. I would only say to that person, be afraid and stand in awe, lest the day may be approaching, when God shall cease to be a reprover to you, and the reins shal be laid on your own neck, and you shall be *as a wild ass snuffing up the wind.*

The second *Aggravation* of slighting known duties, is when a person slights known duties after God hath been discovering discontent with another person for the same sin, when we see the justice of God overtaking another person for slighting of a known duty and yet the person which stands beside, is not afraid to persist in the same sin, this is clear, *Jer.* 3.8. *And I saw, when for all these causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery, I had put her away, and gave her a bill of divorce, yet her treacherous sister* Judah *feared not, but went and played the harlot also.* And if he had said, though *Judah*

Judah have beheld what I have done to *Israel* for her whoorish carriage, yet notwithstanding of this, *she went and played the harlot also.* I confess this is a greater aggravation than the former, and it speaks that such a sinner (in a manner) hath given a defiance to the justice of God, and hath cryed out (in a manner) I care not what God will do, I will do my pleasure.

The third *Aggravation* of the sin of slighting known duties, is, when persons slights known duties after God hath begun to contend with them for so doing, this is a mighty aggravation of sin, as is clear in *Isai.* 57. 17. *For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart.* After a person hath had the Rod shaken over his head, and hath drunk something of the justice of God, for slighting such a duty, yet to persist in it, O that is a scarlet and mighty transgression, and yet are there not many here who are such?

The fourth *Aggravation* of slighting known duties is, when a person slights known duties upon small temptations, is not this certain, a word of a temptation, the half of a word; yea the very nod of a temptation will put us from the doing of known duties. Yea, sometimes we will be glad of a temptation to divert us from the exercise of duties; yea, sometimes it is known, when temptations are not present to divert us from the exercise of known duties, we will go forth and seek a temptation. I confess the devil needs not be at much pains in these days, there is many which gives the devil work and imployment, and if he seek not them, they will seek him?

The fifth *Aggravation* of the sin of slighting known duties, is, when persons does not so much as set about well doing of them, that is a great aggravation, this is clear, *Luke* 12. 47. *He that*

his masters will, and doth it not, neither doth prepare himself to do it, is worthy of double stripes. He will not take pains to prepare his heart for duties, that is a mighty aggravation: Some they are content to be under their fetters, as though they were bound of God, some they are content to live under their convictions, as though it were impossible for them to answer them; and they say there *is no hope.*

The sixth *Aggravation* of slighting known duties is, when a person slights duties after God hath commended the beauty and excellency of such duties; that is, no doubt, great aggravation, as when God doth commend prayer, and discovers the beauty thereof to a Christian, O, then it is a sad and lamentable thing for that person to sit down and slight his duty, that is, (as it were) to slight prayer when it hath on all its ornaments.

The seventh *Aggravation* of slighting known duties, when persons slight duties after they have been convinced of the advantage which waits upon the doing of them. Are there not some that slight prayer, notwithstanding they have been convinced that prayer hath been to them a *mount Tabor*, in which they have seen Christ transfigured? some they will slight prayer, after they have been convinced that it hath been the tristing-place betwixt Christ and them; and after they have been convinced that it hath been at the top of mount *Pisgah*, on which they have gotten a view of the promised land: O, this is a notable aggravation of slighting of known duties, when the person hath this to say, Now I am neglecting my own advantage!

The last *Aggravation*, when a person slights known duties, yet with very little resentment and grief of heart: Are there not many persons that slighted their morning prayer here to day & have not convictions thereof? And are there not ma-

many persons here to day, that oftentime goeth to bed without saying their prayers, & yet have as much peace of conscience, as if they had done it: I think a person hath gone a great length in hardness of heart, when he can slight known duties, & yet not be grieved; yea, and it is a token that they have not only to do with a hardned conscience, but with a hardned will: Are there not many persons that notwithstanding of the slighting of known duties, yet never had a broken heart therefore? Doth not the misbeliever slight the commandment of faith, and yet not weep for it? Doth not the secure christian slight the commandment of prayer, and yet not be grieved therefore? Doth not the presumptuous sinner slight self-examination, and yet is not much grieved? And doth not the dissolute sinner, that is under the power of his idols, slight the commandment of mortification, and yet not have a sore heart for it?

Now the second thing which I shall speak from the scope, is, I shall propose some considerations to press you to the exercise of all known duties.

The first consideration, It is the christian which practises, and not the christian which knoweth, to whom the promises are made: would ye know the christian which hath a right to the promises, it is not the christian which knoweth his duty, but the christian that doth his duty; This is clear, *Mat.* 7. 21. *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven.* If the promises had been annexed to the knowledge of duties; then doubtless *Balaam* had been in Heaven, it is not the knowing christian, but it is the practising christian to whom the promises are made.

The second consideration to press you to the exercise of known duties, it is the christian that is up in practising, and not the knowing

that is blessed; would ye know the blessed Christian? It is not he that knows his duty only, but it is he which knoweth his duty and doth it; according to that word, *Joh.* 13. 17. *If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.* Where ye may see happiness is annexed to doing, and not to knowing: I confess, if ye could speak your duty like an Angel, and if ye know the smallest command in Scripture to be a command lying at your door, yet if ye do it not, ye shall never be blessed. O, know it, there are many knowing persons in hell to day.

The third consideration to press you to practise it, the practising christian, and not the knowing christian that is approven and commended of God; This clear, *Song* 7. 1. *How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O Princes daughter, &c.* Christ takes first notice the Brides feet, which is her practice, and commends her from that; believe it, Christ commends a christians feet more than his eyes, that is, his practice than his knowledge; it is the practising christian shall have that word spoken to him in the day Lord, *Well done good and faithful servant*; it is said, well known good and faithful servant; but it said, *well done*, for if you knew never so much, yet not practise it, Christ will never commend

fourth consideration to press you to the doing own duties, it is not the knowledge but the practise of duties which will give peace to a christians conscience, if ye would know all the commandments Bible, and yet never do one of them, it is not it is not your knowledge that will give your peace peace. I say this to you, many other knowtheir slighting of duty, in one day will make conscience roar like a lion, and they have no answer it. I say unto you, O, christians, if ye peace of conscience in the great and terrible

rible day of the Lord, then practise what ye know and desire to know what ye ought to practise.

The fifth consideration, it is the practice of your duty, and not the knowledge of your duty, by which ye rise up in conformity with God, it is the practising of what ye know, and not the knowledge of what ye should do, that raises you up in conformity with him, if ye know all that ye should do, and do it not, ye may be strangers to God in respect of conformity with him, as if ye were never ignorants. I wish there were in these days less knowledge and more practice, or rather I wish there were more knowledge and practice both together. I think the Christians of this time sins against a witness in heaven, and a witness against their own conscience; I think there are some (but few amongst us) in these days that sinne out of ignorance, but I would say this, the person that sins out of knowledge, condemns himself, but the person that sins out of ignorance, the law condemns him.

There is this, thirdly, that I would say to you from the scope. I would have you observing these six things concerning known duties.

And 1. Many persons are more desirous to know what they should do, than to do what they know, some persons cry out, *wherewith shall I come before the Lord*, and the Lord may answer them with this, *Have I not shewed thee, O man?*

There is this 2. thing which I would have you know ing, the question which shall be proposed to you the great and notable day of the Lord; it shall not O man, what knowest thou? but it shall be, O what didst thou? This shall be the question which Christ shall put home to you in that day, what thou in thy life-time, and not what knowest thou thy life-time.

3. I would say this, believe it, a grain

of ſincerity and practice, is worth a talent of knowledge. It is better to practiſe as the weakeſt Chriſtian, than to know as the moſt excellent Angel, not practiſing what we know; Chriſt weighs not our grace by quantity, but by quality: not by degrees, but by the truth, and reality of them; I ſay, if thou knew never ſo much, a grain weight of ſincerity & practice in Gods ſight, is more worth than it all: If thou wert as eloquent as *Apollos*, and as wiſe as *Solomon*, and could ye ſpeak with as many tongues as *Paul*, and if ye knew and underſtood all myſteries, yet if ye do not practiſe your duties, it is all to no purpoſe.

Fourthly, I would ſay this, the ſlighting of known duties hath many ſad diſadvantages waiting upon them, and I ſhall name theſe four unto you. Firſt, The ſlighting of duties, it is that which makes chriſtians weary in duties; is there any perſon here that ſlights duties at ſuch and ſuch a time, I propheſie it to thee, thou ſhalt weary of duties ere long, this is clear, *Iſai.* 43. 22. *But thou haſt not called upon me, O Jacob, but thou haſt been weary of me, O Iſrael*, I ſay, ſlighting of duties, and wearying in duties they will not be long aſunder. Secondly, Slighting of known duties brings on much hardneſs and ſtupidity of heart, according to that word in *Nehem.* 9. 16. Were diſobedience and hardneſs of heart are knit together, would you know the reaſon why ſo many perſons are under ſo much deadneſs, and under ſo many bonds? It is becauſe they ſlight known duties. Thirdly, The ſlighting of known duties doth theſe three things to our conſcience. It either marrs the peace of conſcience, or elſe it hardens the conſcience. Thirdly, It lulls our conſcience aſleep. I wonder how many of us can call our ſelves tender, ſince there is ſo much ſlighting of that we ought to do. Are there not many Chriſtians. which may ſoon tell all their private prayers that they make to God? there is

is a fourth diſadvantage which waits on the ſlighting of known duties, and it is this, the chriſtian who ſlights duty ſometimes, that duty which a Chriſtian doth, it is exceeding formal: There are ſome chriſtians which ſlight prayer one day, and the ſecond day, and it is one to a hundred but the third day when that chriſtian prays, but it be meer formality. O, what makes chriſtians pray ſo weakly? It is becauſe they teach their hearts the art of praying formally, by ſlighting of duty.

Fifthly, I would ſay this to you, the ſlighting of known duties is the firſt ſtep of the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, this is clear in *Heb.* 12. 26. *For if we ſin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſin.* Ile tell you what is betwixt the ſin of ſlighting known duties and the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, there is no more betwixt them both but that word, *wilfulneſs*, and what knows thou, but thy ſlighting of duties may come to wilfulneſs ere long? Ye would know this, that under the Law there was ſacrifices for ſin of *Ignorance*, and likewiſe for ſins of *Infirmities*, but there was no ſacrifice for preſumptuous ſins, now if this be the firſt ſtep toward the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, I am ſure there are ſome here, which have gone this length, and I fear a little further: Now will ye take home this conviction, and I will ſay this, let the perſon which is not guilty of this offence amongſt us, take up the firſt ſtone and caſt at us. I ſuppoſe our conſcience might accuſe us, and we might ſteal out one by one. O! the dreadful diſadvantages which attends that perſon that ſlights known duties? This is a ſtrange thing, our conſciences are no more moved at what one can ſpeak of that which is our ſin and ſhame than though it did not concern us: I ſuppoſe there is not one here, but they may write this on their foreheads, *Guilty, Guilty*,

Now

Now there is this laſtly which I would ſay unto you, the day is coming when the ſlighters of known duties ſhall be forced to cry out, Ah, that I had been an idiot and had never known my duty, I confeſs the ſlighting of known duties, and the ſinning againſt light ſhall be a mighty aggravation of our ſin. O what terror was it to *Judas* conſcience when he came to think of this, *I ſold my Maſter, and I know I have ſinned in ſo doing*! And, O what terror likewiſe will it be to you, when ye ſhall be convinced of this, my conſcience told me that this was my duty, and I would not do it.

Now the next thing which we ſhall ſpeak to from the words in general, is, that God (in the depth of his condeſcendency) hath many various ways in making known duties unto a perſon or people, this is clear from the words, where God having preſſed duties upon this people by the voice of his miniſters, and he ſends a more ſad and terrible preacher to them, *even a threatning rod*. Now this is clear, that God hath many ways in preſſing people to their duties; Iſa. 5. 4. *What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it, &c.* This is alſo evidently, clear in *Song* 5. 2. *Open to me my ſiſter, my love.* And if that will not do it, he will knock at the door, and ſay, *it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh*, and if this will not do it, he will uſe arguments to perſwade her, *Open to me my ſiſter*: Is not this an argument? Yet he will give her another, *my head is filled with dew, and my hair with the drops of the night*: And if all theſe will not do it, *he will put in his hand at the hole of the door*, which is this, that Chriſt in the depths of his condeſcendency, leaves nothing uneſſayed, to preſs people to their duty, This is alſo clear, *Deut.* 11. 26, 27. where *he ſets life and death, bleſſings and curſings*

ings before them to preſs them to their duty. I confeſs there are many in Heaven to day that Chriſt never took the half of the pains on them as he hath taken on ſome of us, and there are are many in hell to day, upon whom Chriſt took never half ſo much pains as he hath done on ſome of us, and is it not then a wonder, that we are not ſent away to hell likewiſe? now I will tell you ſix great voices or means wherewith God preſſeth people to their duty.

The firſt voice is, the voice of threatnings: all the threatnings which is in the Scripture, this is the voice of them all: O give obedience to your duty! This is remarkably clear, from that choice and remarkable place, *Jer.* 36. *verſe* 3, 6, 7. *Therefore go thou and read the roll which thou haſt written from my mouth, &c. Baruch*, he is commanded to read all the threatnings of God to his people: and what is the precious end he hath before him? *It may be they will preſent their ſupplications before the Lord, and will return every one from his evil way, &c.* This is the very end and ſcope of Gods threatnings, that perſons may preſent their prayers before him, and he will ſhake the Rod over our heads for this end. Therefore I ſay, give the threatnings of God (who are his meſſengers) that which they require, and it is, to put the Rod by the door.

The ſecond great *Voice* whereby God ſometimes preſſeth home duties upon folk, is by the voice & Rod of theſe ſad afflicting diſpenſations which we meet with. This is indeed the end of them, that perſons would give obedience to the commands of God, this is clear in the very ſcope, where he preſſeth them *to hear the voice of the Rod*, that they might give obedience to their duty. And it is alſo clear from that ſweet and excellent promiſe, *Ezek.* 20. 3, 7. *And I will cauſe you to paſs under the Rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the Covenant.* I ſay, the very great end and deſign

of

of God in sending Rods, is, that persons may be engaged to their duty.

The third *voice* wherewith God presseth people to their duty, is by the voice of promises, what is the great voice of the covenant of promises? It is, give obedience to commanded duties, this is clear in *Ezek.* 11. 19, 20. *And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you: and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and I will give them an heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinance, and do them, &c.* As it were, all the great promises of the covenant have this promise, *Obey and ye shall have*; it is obedience that leadeth us to the possession of the promises.

The fourth *voice* whereby God presseth persons to the doing of known duties, is, by the voice of all the mercies which we meet with: I say, the voice of them all is this, *O give obedience to his commandments!* Yea, this is the very language of mercies. All the great things which God hath done to you, what is the scope and end of them all? It is, *O will ye come and obey.*

Fifthly, doth not the great voice of our consciences, and of al the convictions which God roves upon them, cry they not say, *O give obedience and obey him with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength.* Here is this last *voice* whereby God presses people to the doing of known duties, and it is by the voice of the publick Ordinances: what is the great voice of these preachings which we dayly preach unto you but this, *O give obedience to the commands?*

Now I would say this unto you, O people in *Glasgow*, O, hath not God spoken to you by all these voices? Hath he not spoken unto you by mercies? Hath he not spoken unto you by threatnings? By the voice of promises? by the voice of the Rode? by the voice of your consciences? and by the voice of publick Ordinances?

dinances? Oh! look that, the 26. Chapter of *Leviticus*, be not *Glasgows* plagues? Lord keep this place from Gospel condemnation, *For it is a fearful, and dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God? yet seven times more, yet seven times more,* I fear be your plague. Oh! What can God do more to us nor he hath done? Have we not pressed this duty upon you that ye would imbrace Christ, and that this duty might be your delight? If Christ cannot allure us to give our hearts away to him, (in a manner) he will force us to give our hearts to him. I confess it is sad to slight and disobey the voice of the Rod, God hath two times fearfully shaken the threatning Rod of his wrath over this City of *Glasgow* in a few years, look that so many menacings of Gods Rods be not the forerunner of some sad stroak from the Lord, now this is your duty to be hearkening to his voice: This is Christs first word, and is his last word, and it is his best word. O, then take him and imbrace him! I think there is seven steps of judgement which is like to overtake us, if we hearken not to his voice. I say, God hath spoken much, and what can he speak more? and what can he do more? and what can we do less to him. I say, all the slighting of these threatnings of God, to you they are the fore-runner of these seven remarkable steps of judgement.

The first step of judgement which ordinarily doth befall slighters and disobeyers of Gods voice, is, God shall slight their voice when they cry unto him: oh! is it any wonder that God stop his ear at all our prayers: because, is it not known that we stop our ears to his precious invitation and cry, which Christ hath to us, *O take me.* Therefore I say, O give Christ your hearts, and then he will hear your voice.

There is a second *step* of judgement which ordinarily befalls these who slight these great and precious voices

voices by which God is ſpeaking to us, and it is, be afraid that at laſt thou come not to this, that thou ſhalt have no anſwer from God; that God ſhall ſpeak no more unto thee; yea, that thou come not to this, that God ſhall ſpeak his laſt word unto thee, and have no more to ſay. I confeſs when God goeth from preachings to Rods, it is an evidence that we are hard to be perſwaded. It is ſad, when he makes the Rods our Teachers, and we will not be raught by them; though, I think, that there were a bleſſed croſs that ſhould make us come to Chriſt. I think, Chriſt muſt do to us, as *Abſalom* did to *Joab*, he ſent to *Joab* to come to him, and he came not; *Abſalom* then ſet his corn fields on fire, ſo that at laſt he might come. So, I think, Chriſt ſets our corn fields on fire, that we may be conſtrained to come to him.

There is this third *ſtep* be like of our judgement, and it is this, I fear, that ſad and lamentable word is like to befall us, if we continue to ſlight this Goſpel, *Ezek.* 2. 5. *That all fleſh may know that I the Lord have drawn forth my ſword out of his ſheath, it ſhall not return any more.* Yea, God hath begun to draw the ſword of his Juſtice out of his ſheath, and who knows when he will put it up again? Is there any perſon that hath confidence or perſwaſion that God will quickly [illegible] the ſword which he hath drawn againſt us.

The fourth *ſtep* of judgement which ſlights down upon thoſe that ſlighes the voice of Gods threatning [illegible] is that which I think is more ſad, *Ezek.* 21. 11. *The ſword is ſharpened and fourbiſhed that it may glitter, & that it may make a ſore ſlaughter, that it may be given into the hand of the ſlayer.* And what know we but your diſobedience to all theſe voices by which God hath been ſpeaking to you, hath made him to draw his ſword, and he is to deliver it into the hand of the ſlayer? and oh, who ſhall be the ſlayer, into whoſe hand the ſword ſhall be delivered.

There

There is this fifthly, which ſhall be a *ſtep* of our judgement, if we continue to ſlight all theſe voices by which God doth ſpeak to us, and it is that word, *Ezek.* 20. 31. *As I live, ſaith the Lord God, I will not be enquired of by you*, I will ceaſe now to have correſpondence with you any more.

There is this ſixt *ſtep* of judgement which may and ſhall befall us if we go thus one to ſlight all the voices of the Lord to us; and it is that word in *Ezek.* 24. 13. *I would have purged thee, and thou wouldſt not be purged, thou ſhalt not be purged any more, till my fury*, &c..

There is this laſt *ſtep* of our judgement, which, I think is the cape-ſtone of all the reſt, if we continue in all our ſlightings of the voices by which God ſpeaks to us. By all appearance there ſhall be one of theſe two decrees paſt in heaven againſt us First, either that in *Hoſ.* 4. 17. *Ephraim is joyned to his idols, let him alone.* Or ſecondly, that decree in *Rev.* 22. 11. *He that is unjuſt, let him be unjuſt ſtill, and he that is filthy, let him be filthy ſtill*, &c. I ſay, *To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the day of provocation.* *Glaſgow* is yet within ſpeaking terms to God. O! who knows how long it ſhall be ſo? Now if ye will not hear him in the ſtill voice of the Goſpel; O! will ye hear him ſpeaking in the whirle wind? There is nothing that will befall us, which will be the cape-ſtone of our miſery ſo much as that, when Chriſt ſhall come and take his farewel. I think there is few of us who are here, who is within ſight of Chriſt; but I am ſure there are many here which are within ſpeaking terms to Chriſt.

Now what doth he require and call for at your hands? Doth not all the promiſes in the Covenant ſay, O come and take him? Doth not all the Rods and ſad diſpenſations which we meet with, ſay, O come, and take him? Doth not all the threatnings in the Law, ſay unto you, O come, and take him?

And doth not al your convictions of conſcience where by your need of Chriſt is diſcovered) ſay this unto you, O, come and take him! Are ye not ſurrounded about with many voices that cry out this unto the City. O, come and take him? Therefore, O harden not your hearts to this pleaſant voice. I have only theſe ſeven words to ſpeak to you, and I ſhall cloſe.

And Firſt, God hath a threefold Rod, whereby he maketh himſelf known to people; Firſt, He hath the Rod of his mouth, whereby he makes known his word to us. Secondly, there is the Rod of his hand, and that is affliction and croſſes. Thirdly, there is the iron Rod of his deſtruction, when God doth utterly deſtroy, that deſtruction ſhall not riſe up the ſecond time. Now God hath been long ſpeaking to you by the Rod of his mouth, and by the Rod of his afflictions and croſſes; and O, now beware, leſt he come and ſpeak to you by the iron Rod of deſtruction! look that the treaty which is betwixt Chriſt and you be not broken: O, be perſwaded to lay hold upon your time, while it is with you.

Secondly, I would ſay this word unto you, I think the ſlighting of the ſad and lamentable threatnings of God, which he hath threatned and denounced againſt you, is a ſad fore-runner of ſome ſad ſtroaks from the Lord. Are there not many perſons which ſlights threatnings through the want of faith? they believe not that ſuch a threatning is true, and therefore I think it is like that God will preach to your ſenſe, before you believe what he now preaches to your ear, I ſay, the day is coming, that before the threatnings of God be believed by ſome of you, he muſt preach to your ſenſe, and make you to feel that which ye would not believe: And are there not many that will not make uſe of the threatnings, becauſe they think the threatnings is not to them? And therefore they make not particular applications of the threatnings

nings to themſelves. I confeſs, I think it were good for every one of us to take home the threatnings to our own boſom.

Thirdly, ſome will not take and make uſe of the threatnings, becauſe they miſtake what is their meaning. There are ſome that let Chriſt threaten them what he will, they are ſtill in the dark, and cry out, O, what doth Chriſt mean by this threatning? This is clear from the practice of the *Jews*, *John* 7. 33, 34. compared with 35. and 36. *verſes*. Chriſt threatens them with this; *Yet a little while I am with you, and then I go unto him that ſent me. Ye ſhall ſeek me, and ſhall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come.* Now, what hinders them to make application of this threatning? It is in *verſe* 35, 36. *What manner of ſaying is this that he ſaid, Ye ſhall ſeek me, and ſhall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come? will he go to the diſperſed amongſt the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles.* So they know not the meaning of the threatning, and that hinders them to apply it.

The fourth reaſon why many perſons make not application of the threatnings, and it is ignorance of their own condition. Some perſons will be living under ſuch a ſin, and yet when that ſin is threatned, they will not apply it, becauſe they know not their ſin. Are there not ſome perſons that will not take threatning for their worldly mindedneſs, becauſe they call their worldly mindedneſs frugality? Are there not ſome perſons, that when a Miniſter threatens againſt preſumption, they will not take with it, becauſe they think their preſumption faith and confidence? And are there not many things threatned againſt hypocriſie, and few of them applyed, and this is becauſe we think our hypocriſie ſincerity.

Fifthly, This marrs the application of threatnings to many, becauſe God hath a mind to deſtroy them

therefore they do not apply threatnings: That is a terrible word which is spoken of the sons of *Eli*, in 1 *Sam.* 2. 25. *Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their fathers because the Lord would slay them.* Some, God hath a mind to destroy, and therefore they do not apply threatnings.

There is this sixth ground why persons will not make application of threatnings, and it is because ordinarly some personsare possessed with high thoughts of themselves, and too much self-love. There is nothing marrs the application of threatnings so much as self-love: we have no will to believe any sad thing against our selves.

Lastly, There is this which marrs the application of threathings, and it is our not knowing what a sad and sinful thing it is to slight, and not apply threatning, I confess, I think it is a question that is hard to determine, whether the slighting of promises, or the slighting of commands,or the slighting of threatnings, be the greatest sin? But I am sure of this, our slighting of threarnings, is the rise of our slighting of promises, and likewise the rise of our slighting of commands, Now I shall say no more: O that ye were perswaded to hearken to God, that Christ might not be provoked to depart from you, and take his farewell.And to him who is able to help you to hold him *till the breaking of the day*,we desire to give praise.

SERMON IX.

Micah 6. 6. *The Lords voice cryeth unto the City, and the man of Wisdom shall see thy name, hear ye the Rod, and who hath appointed it.*

IT is nor much though a Christian *be put in a furnace hot seven times more than ordinary, if one in the form and likeness of the Son of man walk up and down with him*

him in the furnace. Is it not Christs presence which makes a wilderness like the garden of the Lord? Is it not Christs presence which makes afflictions pleasant?Is it not Christs presence which makes a crown of thorns a crown of joy? Is it not Christs presence which makes heaven pleasant? And must it not be Christs presence that must make earth pleasant also? I confess, desertion under the cross is one of the most sad and afflicting dispensations which a Christian can meet with: but however, ere long there will be a blessed exchange of cups, that in stead of the cup of bitterness, which is presented to a Christian to drink (while he is here below) he shall have a cup of the eternal consolations that is above presented to him from the hand of the Lord.

I think a Christian may be poor in possession, but rich in hope.I think a Christian may not have much as to his sensible enjoyments, but may he not cast up his eyes unto the eternal inheritance, and cry out, *yonder is my portion, in that land are my lines cast.* There are these four things that I would say unto you before I come to the words.

The first thing which I would have you taking notice of, is this, there are three things which a Christian may meet with which are unspeakable, First, sometimes a Christian may meet with an unspeakable sorrow, so that he cannot make language of it, because of the anxiety of his heart, but is forced to cry out that word, *my stroak is heavier than my groaning.* Secondly, a Christian may meet with an unspeakable mercy, he may meet with such a mercy and token of love from the hand of the Lord, that if he were put to it, he could not make language of it, he could say no more to the commendation of his mercy, but this, *what shall I say more? he hath spoken it, and himself hath done it.* Thirdly, A Christian may meet with an unspeakable joy, he may be brought to that case and con-

condition that he cannot make language of his joy, according to that word, 1 *Pet.* 1.8. *Believing, ye rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*

Secondly, I would have you taking notice of this, that it is exceeding much of the concernment of a Christian to believe and close with this truth, that there is not a grain weight of affliction in his cup, which infinite wisdom doth not think fit should be there, and which infinite love did not put there: To know and rest upon this, that infinite wisdom and infinite love was at the mixing of the cup, (and his tender heart will carve no more out to us than we are able to bear) this is an help to patience.

Thirdly, I would have you taking notice of this, I think there are some Christians that is forced to bless God more for their crosses than their mercy, and that they have been forced in their darkest nights, to cry out, *It is good for me that I have been afflicted.*

There is this fourthly, which I would have you taking notice of, that the cross of a Christian, it hath two faces, an outward face and an inward face, and the outward face of the cross seems oftentimes the most unpleasant, but O if a Christian could win to see the inside of his cross, he might sit down by the river of *Babel*, and there pen songs of praise to God, even praise for this that he hath been afflicted; O, it is comfortable to the Christian that Christ hath gone to heaven by the way of the cross that his blessed feet hath trodden that way, and that his precious lips hath drunk of that cup.

But to come to the words, we told you that there was five things in the words to be considered; First, that here was an excellent exhortation given to the people of *Israel* and *Samaria*, which in short is this, *Hear the voice of the Rod, and who hath appointed it*; and from this exhortation ye may take notice of these five things; First, That every cross and sad dispensation

tion which a christian meets with, it hath a voice and a language in it, therefore says he, *hear the voice of the Rod*, as if he had said, take notice what the Rod says, and what it calls for from you. The second thing to take notice of from this command and exhortation is this, that it is the duty of a christian to observe and give obedience unto what the Rod speaks and calls for? therefore is the command given forth, *hear the voice of the Rod.* The third thing that we take notice of from this command is, that there is a great unwillingness in persons to hear what the Rod speaks, and therefore the command is put home, *hear the voice of the Rod.* Fourthly, take notice of this, that the voice of the Rod, and the voice of him that hath appointed it, are one and the same very thing, therefore these two are knit together, *hear the voice of the Rod, and of him who hath appointed it.* There is this lastly, which we would have you taking notice of from this command and exhortation. It is a great point of spiritual wisdom for a christian to take up and hear the voice of the Rod, therefore it is said, *the man of wisdom shall see thy Name.* It is not every man that can take up what the Rod speaks, it is only the man that is indued with much heavenly wisdom from God.

Now as for the first thing that we spake from the words, *viz.* That every Rod which a christian meets with, it hath a voice in it. Before I speak to this, I would have you to take along these considerations.

First, it is a singular and most remarkable step of the good will of God, when he doth manifest the meaning of a Rod to a person or a people, *Job* 33.16. *He openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction*, which is brought in as a singular favour from God, that is, he makes them to know what the Rod speaks, *Elihu* puts such a note of mercy upon this, that he thinks it a step of delivery from the Rod, *He delivers*

the poor from affliction, how is this, that *he opens their ears, and seals their instruction?* It is, when God makes a person to take up the meaning of the Rod, for when he makes them to understand the voice of the Rod, it is half a delivery from the Rod, do you not know this, that when the cause of a disease is known, it is half healed? So when the end that God hath in sending rods, is known and taken up: we may say it is half removed.

Secondly, The Christians of old hath taken much pains to know the voice of the rods that they met with, as is clear from 2 *Sam.* 21. 1. where the land of *Israel* being three years under famine, *David* went and enquired the cause of that Rod, and it is likewise clear from *Job* 7.20. where *Job* is exceeding desirous to know why God set him up as a mark for his arrows, and that he was become a burden to himself.

Thirdly, We would have you to take notice of this, that it is exceeding anxious for a tender Christian to be under a silent Rod, to be under such a dispensation that he knows not the language of it, this is clear in *Job* 3. 23. where *Job* makes this the cape-stone of his sorrow, that his way was hid, that is, knew not what was the reason of Gods contending with him, after such a way, as likewise it is clear in *Job* 10. 1. where *Job* is put to propose that question to God, *Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me?*

The fourth *Consideration*, that we would have you taking along with you, is this, it is exceeding hard for a Christian to profite by a Rod, till once he take up the meaning of it, and I shall give you these three grounds, why it is so hard for a Christian to profite by a Rod, till he know the voice and meaning of it: First, Because it is hard for a Christian to win to submission to the Rod, till he know the voice of it, it is the knowledge of the meaning of the Rod, that makes a Christian cry out, *I was dumb and opened not my mouth.* Secondly, Because as long as the meaning of the Rod is hid from a Christian, he knoweth not what remedy to go about to deliver himself from that Rod, but when he knoweth the reason of Gods contending with him, he hath a clear way before him how to win out from the cross. Thirdly, This is the reason why a Christian cannot profite by the Rod, till he know the voice and meaning of it: he cannot win to a solide closing with this truth, that God is in the Rod, till he win to the knowledge of the voice of the Rod in some measure; there is nothing will help a Christian to cry out, God is in the Rod, then this, his knowing the reason of Gods contending with him.

There is this fifth consideration that we would propose, a Christian may be long under a Rod, before he know the voice and language of it; we conceive this is clear in 2 *Sam.* 21. 1. where the land of *Israel* is under three years famine before *David* could take up the reason of Gods contending with them; it is not to be supposed but *David* had made frequent supplications to God for understanding the meaning of that Rod, and yet there are three years intervening before he can know it.

The last consideration that we would propose unto you, when a Christian wins to take up the voice and language of the Rod, he ought not to delay, but presently go about and answer it; this is clear in the practice of *David*, when he knew the reason of Gods contending with him, he immediatly sets about to remove it. I confess it is a fault among many, they are more desirous to have their crosses removed, than to have their crosses sanctified unto them; some pray to have the bitterness out of the Cross more than to have the bitterness of sin removed out of the Cross.

Now in speaking to the first thing in the words, *viz.* That every Rod and Dispensation of God hath

a voice and language in it : I ſhall ſpeak a little to theſe four things: Firſt, How a Chriſtian may win to take up the meaning of the Rod in particular afflictions. Secondly, I would ſpeak a little to ſome miſtakes in taking up the voice and language of ſuch a Rod and afflicting diſpenſation. Thirdly, I would ſpeak to this, how a Chriſtian may be helped to give obedience to the voice of the Rod. Fourthly, I ſhall ſpeak a little to eight or nine ſpecial voices which the Rod oftentimes hath; As for the firſt of theſe, *viz.* how a chriſtian may win to to take up the meaning of the Rod and ſad diſpenſation, I ſhall preſcribe unto you theſe ſix ways.

Firſt Be making ſerious application to the throne of grace, that God would give you light concerning ſuch a Rod; This is remarkably clear in that inſtance in *Gen.* 25. 22. where *Rebecca* being under ſuch a particular Rod, and ſhe knew not Gods way in it, therefore ſhe went and enquired of the Lord, and ſhe received a particular and diſtinct anſwer, to her caſe; and it is alſo clear in in the practice of *David*, 2 *Sam.* 21. 1. *Iſrael* being under a Rod of famine, *David* went and enquired of the Lord concerning the meaning of it, and he met with a diſtinct anſwer. And this is likewiſe clear in *Job* 10. 2. where *Job* being in the dark, concerning the meaning of the Rod, he deſires *that God would ſhew him wherefore he contends with him.* I will tell you ſeven ſad caſes which a chriſtian may be put to, of which Chriſt is an excellent reſolver. The firſt caſe which a chriſtian may be put to, which Chriſt hath exceeding good ſkill to reſolve, and it is that, *Song* 1. 7. *Tell me, O thou whom my ſoul loveth, where thou feedeſt, where thou makeſt thy flock to reſt at noon*, &c. When a chriſtian knoweth not where Chriſt is feeding, to go to him, he will ſweetly reſolve that queſtion, for ye may know this, a Chriſtian may be brought to theſe two ſteps of

of diſertion; Firſt, Chriſt may be gone. And ſecondly, ye know not in all the world where to find him, as in *Joh.* 20. 13. in that inſtance of *Mary*, and in *Job* 23. 3. *Job* hath not only loſt God, but alſo he knoweth not where to find him. The ſecond caſe which Chriſt hath exceeding good ſkill to reſolve, is this, *Who is the Lord, that I may believe in him?* That caſe or queſtion which the blind man was put to, *Joh.* 9. 35. O will not Chriſt ſweetly reſolve that queſtion. Is there any perſon that hath this queſtion, *Who is Chriſt that I may believe in him?* The third caſe or queſtion which Chriſt hath exceeding good ſkill to reſolve, *Good Maſter, what ſhall I do to inherit eternal life?* Is there any here that is put to that queſtion? go to Chriſt, and he can ſweetly ſolve it you. The fourth queſtion which chriſt can beſt reſolve, is that queſtion which *Paul* had, *what wilt thou have me to do?* The fifth caſe in which it is beſt to go to Chriſt to get it reſolved, when a perſon is brought to this ſtrait, *I knew not the mind of the Lord?* go to God and humbly aſk, *Rom.* O, *why am I thus?* There is this ſixth caſe, and it is *Job* 7. 20. *I have ſinned, and what ſhall I do to thee, O thou preſerver of men?* When thou art put to this caſe, Chriſt can anſwer ſweetly thus, *Only acknowledge thy iniquity.* The laſt caſe which Chriſt can ſweetly reſolve, is in the word before the Text, *Wherewith ſhall I come before the Lord?* If thou be put to this queſtion; no anſwer can be given to it but this, *The ſacrifices of the Lord are a broken and a contrite heart.* Now this is the firſt way how a Chriſtian may win to know the voice and meaning of the Rod, even to make ſerious ſupplication to God, that he would make known to them his Name.

There is this ſecond way by which a chriſtian may win to know the voice and meaning of the

if the Rod was timed to thee when thy heart was under much distance from God that probably is the meaning of the Rod, *It is good for thee to draw near to God*; or if the Rod be timed unto a Christian when he is much taken up in pursuit after the things of the world, and if thy Rod tryeth thee when thou art under much formality in going about duties then by all appearance that is the voice of the Rod to thee, to *stir up thy self to take hold on God*; So if a Christian would win to know the meaning of a Rod, let him compare his present frame with the timing of the Rod unto him.

The third way how a Christian may win to know the voice and meaning of the Rod is by reflecting on the manner and circumstances of the Rod; for this is certain, the sins of a people or person may be engraven on the Rod in very legible Letters, *so that he that runs may read them*. There are some times that the Rod doth preach our sins so plainly, that we need not to interpret it; this is clear *Judge* 1. 6, 7. there is such a relation betwixt *Adoni-bezek's* judgement, and his sin, that he might read his judgements as he did his sins in his stroak, saith he, *Threescore and ten Kings having their Thumbs and their great Toes cut off, gathered their meat under my Table as I have done, so hath God requited me*, &c. For now was he taken prisoner, and his Thumbs and great Toes cut off: and it is clear from that word, *Solomon* hath, *Prov.* 21. 13. *He that stoppeth his ear at the cry of the poor, he shall cry and God shall not hear him*, Zach. 7. 13. *Therefore it is come to pass that as he cryed and they would not hear, so they cried and I would not hear, saith the Lord of hosts*: Where ye may see a divine proportion and analogy betwixt the Rod and [illegible].

The fourth way how a Christian may win to know the voice and meaning of the Rod, and it is by observing

ving what hath been the mind of the Lord, and what he called for from his people in Scripture, when they were put under such a Rod and anxious dispensation: Search what was Gods mind to the godly in Scripture under such a Rod, and by all appearances it is yet his mind in the same cross; according to that general rule, *Rom.* 15. 4. *For whatsoever things are written afore time were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.*

The fifth way for a Christian to win to know the meaning of the Rod, is to be much in observing the circumstances of the Rod, there may be circumstances in a Rod by which a christian may win to exceeding much light concerning what is the Lords mind by such a Rod; it is known the observing of the circumstances of a Rod will help a christian to these three things. First, That such a Rod is from the hand of the Lord. Secondly, That God in the midst of wrath remembreth mercy. Thirdly, It will help a Christian to know the voice and language of the Rod sometimes in the cross it self. a christian cannot read love and yet in the circumstances of the cross he may [illegible] to read very much love.

There is this sixth and last way how a christian may win to the knowledge of the voice and meaning of the Rod, and it is to be considering that all the Rods and dispensations which a christian meets with, hath one of these three ends. First, The Rod is either sent to a christian that he may mortifie his predominant idols; Or, secondly, for exercise of his predominant grace; Or else, thirdly, that he may be put to the exercise of that which ought to be his predominant duty.

These are voices and languages of the cross [illegible] Christian meets with. And I would only by [illegible] say these two things to you. First, It is easier to [illegible] Rod patiently which is for the trial and ex[illegible]

our predominant grace, than to bear a Rod patiently which is for the mortifying of our predominant idols there is no Rod which a christian can bear worse, than the Rod which stricks at the root of his predominant idols? so a proud man he can bear any cross better nor reproach, and a worldly-minded man can bear any cross better than poverty, so the cross which stands in direct opposition to our predominant idols, we have great difficulty to bring our hearts to patient submission under it, are there not many, that when their idols are stricken, they cry out with that man in *Judges* 18. 24. *They have taken away my Gods, and what have I more?* Is it not certain that when God stricks sometimes at the root of our predominant idols, we cry out with *Jonah*, *That it is better for me to die than to live?* Though I may say, the cross which we have least will to meet with, is ordinarily best for us: Now if so we may speak, our will and our well are seldom or never knit together: but precious Christ, his will and our well are oftentimes knit together. Secondly, I would say this by the way, there are ordinarily some analogy betwixt our cross and our sin: if the *Egyptians* did kil al the male children of the *Israelitis*, by casting them into the river, God doth likewise kill the first born into the land of *Egypt*, and, if *Nadab* and *Abihu* offer strange fire upon Gods altar, he will consume them with fire from heaven; and if the *Sodomites* be taken up with the fire of lust, God will bring down fire from heaven and consume them.

Now the second thing which we promised to speak unto, was to some mistakes which Christians have concerning the meaning of the Rod.

And first, many thinks (indeed) the cross speaks wrath when it speaks love, and some when they cannot read love in the hand of God, they think it is impossible to read love in his heart: some thinks that love and the rod cannot be together at all: I say, God

God may never love a person more nor when he is correcting him. But first, I would say to a person under that mistake, we never know by any of these things whether love or hatred belongs to the person that is afflicted, *For all things happen alike to all: as it happens to the fool, so happens it to the wise man, to the righteous, even as to the wicked.* Secondly, I would say this to the believer that is under this mistake, he reads wrong that reads wrath only upon the cross, for it is certain love is written in dark characters upon it, and the spiritual man he may read them: Hence it is, *Heb.* 12. 5, 6. We are commanded to remember the exhorration that speaks unto us, as unto sons: *My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chastneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*

The second mistake concerning the meaning of the cross, is, some thinks God can never answer their prayers so long as he is plaguing them, according to that strange divinity, *Job* 9. 16. *If I had called, and he had answered me, yet would I not believed that he had hearkened unto my voice.* So this is the mistake, all answers of their prayers are nothing, if God be contending with them.

The 3. great mistake concerning the meaning of the Rod, is when persons begin to dispute their interest when they meet with such a Rod and sad dispensation and when they do not (indeed) see what is the reason of Gods contending with them, when he puts them in the furnace, presently to sit down, and reject their confidence, and cast away their hope, this is certainly a great mistake of the meaning of the Rod.

The 4. great mistake of the voice and language of Gods threatning Rod is for a person to think religion but vanity, and an empty thing under the cross, a christian may be brought to this, now I would not give

place

plank for godliness, it is nothing worth at all, as is clear from *Ps.* 73. 13. when he takes notice, *he was plagued every morning, and the wicked was in prosperity about him*, he crys out, *Verily I have washed my hands in innocency, and cleaned my heart in vain*; yea, it is hard for a person not to cast off religion, when God is contending with him. O, it is hard to have a great respect unto the ways of godliness under the cross.

There is this fifth mistake under the cross, and it is to dispute the fellowship a christian hath with God, according to that word of *Gideon*, *Judges* 6. 13. *If the Lord be with us how then is all this evil come upon us?* The Christian will cry out, I cannot reconcile Gods heart and his hand, I cannot reconcile love in God, and his being with me, and this cross and Rod.

Now, Thirdly, I would speak a little to this, how a christian may be helped to obey the voice of the Rod, and we conceive if ye will take along these things with you, ye may be helped to obey what the Rod calls for at your hands.

And first then, if the Rod call for the mortifying of such a particular lust and idol, it is incumbent for you presently to sit down and bring up your hearts to a spiritual detestation of such an idol. that if God be casting you for your idols, ye must subscribe a bill of divorce to them, and cry out, *what have I any more to do with idols?* and say to them, *Get you hence, and cast them away to the moles and to the bats.*

There is a second way or help how a christian may win to the obedience of the voice of the Rod, and it is, if the voice of the Rod be for the mortifying of such an idol, I intreat you presently sit down & study the disadvantage of such an idol, and study also what hazard there is by keeping thy soul constantly knit to it: when the voice of the Rod is this to thee; O, thou such an idol, or such a *Delilah*, thou must then come to know what it is to thy disadvantage to keep such an idol, and what it is to thy advantage to quite it: I confess there are some that their idols are mortified to their light before they be mortified to their affections; yea, there are some, they have a constrained mortification, their idols are mortified, and die to them before they be mortified to their idols.

Thirdly, If the voice of the Rod be this, stir up such a grace, and be much in the exercise and practice of it: then I say, study to know that there is as much spiritual advantag in the real and spiritual exercise of such a grace, as ye can lose by all the Rods ye can meet with. Is it not certain that *Job* gained as much spiritual advantages by the exercise of his faith, and of his patience; yea, much more than in losing all the things that he lost? If a christian once knew that his riches consisted in the exercise of his grace, there would not be a Rod sent for the trial and exercise of his grace, but he would take it chearfully in his arms.

The fourth way how a christian may be helped to win to obey the voice of the Rod, and it is, if the voice of the Rod be for the tryal of thy predominant grace and for the exercise of it, then, I say, consider this, that the trial and exercise of thy predominant grace by the Rod, it shall have (if it be sanctified) a glorious and excellent issue and peace, it is the Rod that hath in it noble advantages that is immediatly erected for the tryal of thy predominant grace.

The sixth way how a christian may win to obey the voice of the Rod, and it is, if the voice of the Rod be, that thou should set about the exercise of such a duty, then endeavour seriously that all impediments and lets to that duty be laid aside; as if the cross call for the exercise of faith, or if the cross call for the exercise of prayer, then I say, remove all things that may be impediments to hinder thee from the exercise thereof; or from the exercise of faith leave (as is with thy servants and thy asses at the foot of the mountain and go thou up & sacrifice all thy idols & lusts.

The ſeventh and laſt way how a chriſtian may be helped to win to obey the voice of the rod, if the voice of the rod be to be much in the exerciſe of ſuch a duty, then ſtudy to have the luſtre of duty, and the beauty thereof commended unto thee. O, our prayer is a thing which doth much good to us. I think this is the reaſon why God hath contended with many; would make duties ſweet to them, & he would make ſin bitter

Now the fourth thing that I ſhall ſpeak a little unto, is to what ought to be a chriſtians duty while he is walking under a ſilent rod, and knoweth not the voice of it; and I would give you theſe five directions how a Chriſtian ſhould carry himſelf under a ſilent rod.

Firſt, he would know God to be juſt, though he knoweth not for what he contends with him.

2. He would be ſerious in making ſupplications to God, to know the diſtinct meaning of ſuch a Rod; I confeſs ſometimes we take the Rod to be ſilent, because we cannot hear the voice of it; but oftentimes the ſilence of the Rod is from this, that we know not the voice of it, and we hear it not though he ſpeak to us in an audible language, but if a chriſtian be under a ſilent Rod, it becomes him then to go to God with *Lord, I have ſinned, I will do no more, ſhew me wherein I have offended.*

There is this third direction which I would give to a Chriſtian under a ſilent Rod, he would be ſerious to know what is the reaſon of Gods keeping up his mind from him in ſuch a Rod: I ſay, when the Rod is dark, and the croſs is ſilent, it is ſuitable then to ſay, what is the reaſon of this, that God doth not let me underſtand the voice and language of the Rod; I confeſs there may be ſad things hinted at when God puts a Chriſtian under dark and dumb croſſes, however, although it be ſo, I think it is good for us to be walking ſubmiſſively in the dark, for he will guide the blind in the way that they know not; ſometimes it is better for us to have dumb and ſilent croſſes, than to have a ſpeaking croſs.

The fourth direction, the chriſtian would ſtudy to bring his heart to a tender and ſpiritual frame; for ſometimes our not underſtanding the voice of the Rod, it is becauſe we are not ſpiritual.

Laſtly, I would give this direction to the Chriſtian who is under a dark and ſilent croſs, ſtudy at that time to have thy heart moſt united to Chriſt, for at that time thou is moſt ready to fall: O, that is a time when the devil fiſhes moſt, becauſe that is the Chriſtians drumly water (ſo to ſpeak) O, it is known, the devil never gets any advantage over a chriſtian ſo much as when he knows not the meaning of the croſs! I confeſs the devil will tell you a falſe meaning of a croſs, he can interpret the language of a croſs after another way than God doth interpret it.

Now being to chooſe our diſcourſe, I ſhall name theſe eight or nine Obſervations concerning the croſs which I would have you taking notice of,

Firſt, When a chriſtian doth firſt meet with a croſs, he may be patient and ſubmiſſive under it, and yet if the threed of the affliction be ſpun out to any length, he may turn impatient. I confeſs it is not much the firſt day that the croſs meets with us to be patient; but let the croſs lye on us, then we will cry out, why is it that God deals thus with me? this is clear in the practice of *Job*, when firſt he met with the croſs, he could take it in his arms, and cry out, *The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away; Bleſſed be his Name.* But let the croſs lie a little while on *Job*, then he will cry out, *I chooſe ſtrangling and death rather than life*: A green wound is half whole (as we uſe to ſpeak) but let once our wound begin to feaſter, then we will be impatient.

The ſecond obſervation which we would have you to take notice of concerning the croſs. There are five

ſorts

ſorts of blaſphemy which one that is under a croſs may fall into; Firſt, he may fall into that blaſphemy of calling God unjuſt, according to that word, *Ezek.* 18.25. *Yet ye ſay, the way of the Lord is not equal,* &c. The ſecond ſort of blaſphemy is; when we call God unfaithful, according to that ſtrange word, *Jer.* 15. 18. *Wilt thou be altogether unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail?* O, do we not think that God is not half ſo good as his word under the croſs? The third ſort of blaſphemy is, when we call God weak, there are ſometimes we are brought to that, *Is there no Balm in Gilead? and is there no Phyſician there? my ſtroak is grievous, and my wound is incurable.* Sometimes when we are under the croſs, we think it is above Gods power to ſet us free from it. The fourth ſort of blaſphemy which a man may have under the croſs, and that is when he chargeth God with changeableneſs, I think chriſtians under the croſs, are like men firſt going to Sea, when they go firſt out from the haven or by a Rock, they think that they are ſtanding ſtill, but the land beſide them is moving, ſtirring; ſo when firſt we come under the croſs, we think God is changeable, but we are ſtill the ſame. The fifth ſort of blaſphemy which one may have under the croſs is that is, when he chargeth God with forgetfulneſs; you know that forgetfulneſs is the property of an ingrate man, and O, if you call God ingrate or unthankful, you may call him any thing. I confeſs, I think Chriſt forgets nothing of a Chriſtian but his wrongs.

The third Obſervation concerning the croſs, is this, It is a ſpeaking evidence of the want of a Sonne frame, if the croſs do hinder us in the exerciſe of graces. I confeſs little profiting under the croſs, ſpeaks this much, that either we are not ſons, or have not a ſon-like frame, for theſe who are the Lords children, when folly is bound to them, the Rod of correction drives it away, there are many of us in our afflictions

flictions are of *Ahaz's* frame, we ſin more and more in our afflictions.

The fourth obſervation which I would give you concerning the croſs, is this, there are four things which a Chriſtian would take up concerning his croſs; Firſt, He would take up unſpeakable wiſdom in his croſs. Secondly, He would take up unſpeakable love therein. Thirdly, He would take up unſpeakable juſtice and holineſs in his croſs: And fourthly, He would take up theſe great advantages that floweth to him from the ſpiritual uſe-making of his croſs. Some chriſtians, they can read wiſdom, juſtice and holineſs on a croſs, before they can read love upon it, but however, it is good to take up all theſe four in the croſſes, and ſad diſpenſations which you meet with.

There is this fifthly, which I would ſay concerning the croſs, there is not a croſs and ſad diſpenſation which a chriſtian meets with, but it is a gift and a ſpecial donation ſent by the hand of Chriſt to him: there are ſome they look upon the promiſes as gifts, but ſay to thee, thou muſt look upon thy croſſes as gifts alſo, *Philip.* 1. 29. *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Chriſt, not only to believe on him, but alſo to ſuffer for his ſake.* And there are ſome likewiſe that look upon their ſenſible enjoyments but not on their croſſes as gifts. I ſay, if once a chriſtian win to know that the croſs is a gift, he would likewiſe win to patience under the croſs.

The ſixth Obſervation concerning the croſs, there are ſome peaceable fruits of righteouſnes that redounds to a Chriſtian which is rightly exerciſed under the croſs, *Heb.* 12. 11. *Now no chaſtening for the preſent ſeems to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheleſs yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs unto them that are exerciſed thereby.* I ſay ſometimes the Rod of a Chriſtian is like *Aarons* Rod, it will bud and bloſſom in a night, and bring forth pleaſant fruit.

The ſeventh Obſervation is, the moſt rare enjoyments of a chriſtian are triſted to the time of his being under the croſs, when was it that *Jacob* ſaw the Angels of God deſcending and aſcending upon that ladder? was it not when he was forced to lie in the open field? when was it that theſe three children ſaw Chriſt in the likeneſs of the Son of Man? was it not when they were in the furnace, when it was hot ſeven times more than ordinary? when was it that *John* got ſuch a viſion of God? was it not when he was in the Iſle of *Patmos* for the Teſtimony of Chriſt? when was it that *Ezekiel* ſaw the viſions of God? was it not when he was ſitting by the river *Chebar* in the land of his captivity? and when was it that *Stephen* ſaw the Heavens open, and ſaw Chriſt ſtanding at the right hand of God, was it not when they were ſtoning him to death for the Teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt? I ſay the most remarkable enjoyments of a Chriſtian are tryſted under the croſs, according to that word of the *Pſalmiſt*, *To the righteous there ariſeth light in darkneſs.*

The eight Obſervation that we would propoſe concerning the Croſs. Oftentimes God tryſts joy to a chriſtian under the Croſs, when a chriſtian is beginning to loſe his hope, and all things (as it were) grow dark about him, then doth light ariſe unto him, according to that wonderful and ſtrange expreſſion, Zach. 14.7. *At the evening time it ſhall be light, when there is more appearance of darkneſs coming on.* Yea, even at that time it ſhall be light; Is it not certain, a chriſtian hath been ſitting down at the midnight of afflictions, crying out, *My hope and my ſtrength is periſhed from the Lord*, and yet the Lord hath ſaid to him, even by his diſpenſations, thou art a lyar; have not ſometimes been caſting away our hope, and God hath looſed our bonds, and we have been free, when he was looſed from his priſon, we have been as though we had ſeen a viſion.

Laſtly,

Laſtly, I would ſay this to commend the croſs, there are ſtrange expreſſions in the Scripture that may make out to a Chriſtian that the croſs is not ſuch a thing as many takes it to be. The firſt expreſſion is in that word, *James* 1. 2. *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.* There are two things in that expreſſion, which may make it ſtrange; Firſt, a Chriſtian ſhould count it all joy; It had not been ſo ſtrange if he had ſaid, count it joy or rejoyce when ye are afflicted; but, O, that is ſtrange, *Count it all joy when ye are afflicted.* That which ſecondly makes it ſtrange, *Count it all joy when ye fall into diverſe temptations*; That is rejoyce ay more and more when you meet with many croſſes. There is this ſtrange expreſſion which may commend the croſs, and it is that word, *Job* 5. 17. *Happy is the man whom God correcteth*, &c. There is very much happineſs in ſuch a lot and diſpenſation: Some of us thinks there are no people ſo curſed as theſe who are afflicted. But I ſay, a chriſtians afflictions are no ſmall mercies but bleſſings. The third ſtrange expreſſion which may commend the croſs, *Job* 5. 22. *At deſtruction and famine ſhall thou laugh*, &c. Not to have a ſad look (as it were) for all the croſſes and afflictions that may come. The fourth ſtrange expreſſion which may commend the croſs, is that word, *Rom.* 5. 3. *We glory in tribulation*, &c. The laſt expreſſion which may commend it, and it is the glorious ends that waits upon theſe perſons which is exerciſed under the croſs: According to that word, *James* 1. 10. *Bleſſed is the man that endureth temptations, for when he is tryed he ſhall have the crown of life.* I ſay, let a chriſtian comfort himſelf in this, *That in ſix evils he will deliver him, yea in ſeven no evil ſhall come near him*: Let a chriſtian be put to never ſo much affliction, let him comfort himſelf with this, that his Saviour was put to walk [illegible] down in the earth, *and had not whereon to*

head, and let him likewiſe comfort himſelf with this, that the day is coming, when he ſhall enter into thoſe glorious and excellent habitations; what is the croſs of a Chriſtian? Is there not much in heaven to comfort them againſt their Croſſes? I ſhall not ſay much to preſs Chriſtian ſubmiſſion under the croſs? I think it is more ſuitable to be enquiring after duty under a croſs, than to be enquiring how to eſcape out from under it? It is good to put all in Chriſts hand concerning the croſs, the manner of it, and the lengthning of it, and alſo the ourgate from under it. Now to him who is able to make all things work together for the beſt (even afflictions) unto his people, we deſire to give praiſe.

FINIS.